

STILL BROWN WILLY'S
BEST SELLING C64 MAG

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COMMODORE



SNK vs. CAPCOM vs. C64!
A QUARTET OF SIZZLERS REVIEWED!
DEMO PIXEL WIZARDS UNMASKED
ELECTRIFYING PSUs GO ZZAP!



OLIVER
FREY



ISSUE 17

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Welcome to issue 17 of the high-score champ of mags! It's been like *Space Invaders* here at ZZAP! Towers, with folks buzzing around arranging something called CRASH Live. I heard the attendees all wore clashing colours. Odd. But enough about ol' rubber keys', because though I normally spank, erm, thank our motley crew of writers at the end of the issue, this time I want to thank all you C64 game devs. Spankly you make my job bloody easy; we could be scraping together material, scratching our heads trying to big up a couple of games, but instead we've got more SIZZLERS than you can shake a frying pan at. It's truly amazeballs after 41 years. So with the Annual serving as our Xmas issue, I shall now tuck off and let you tuck into Issue 17. Happy Holidays!

Christian Simpson, Editor



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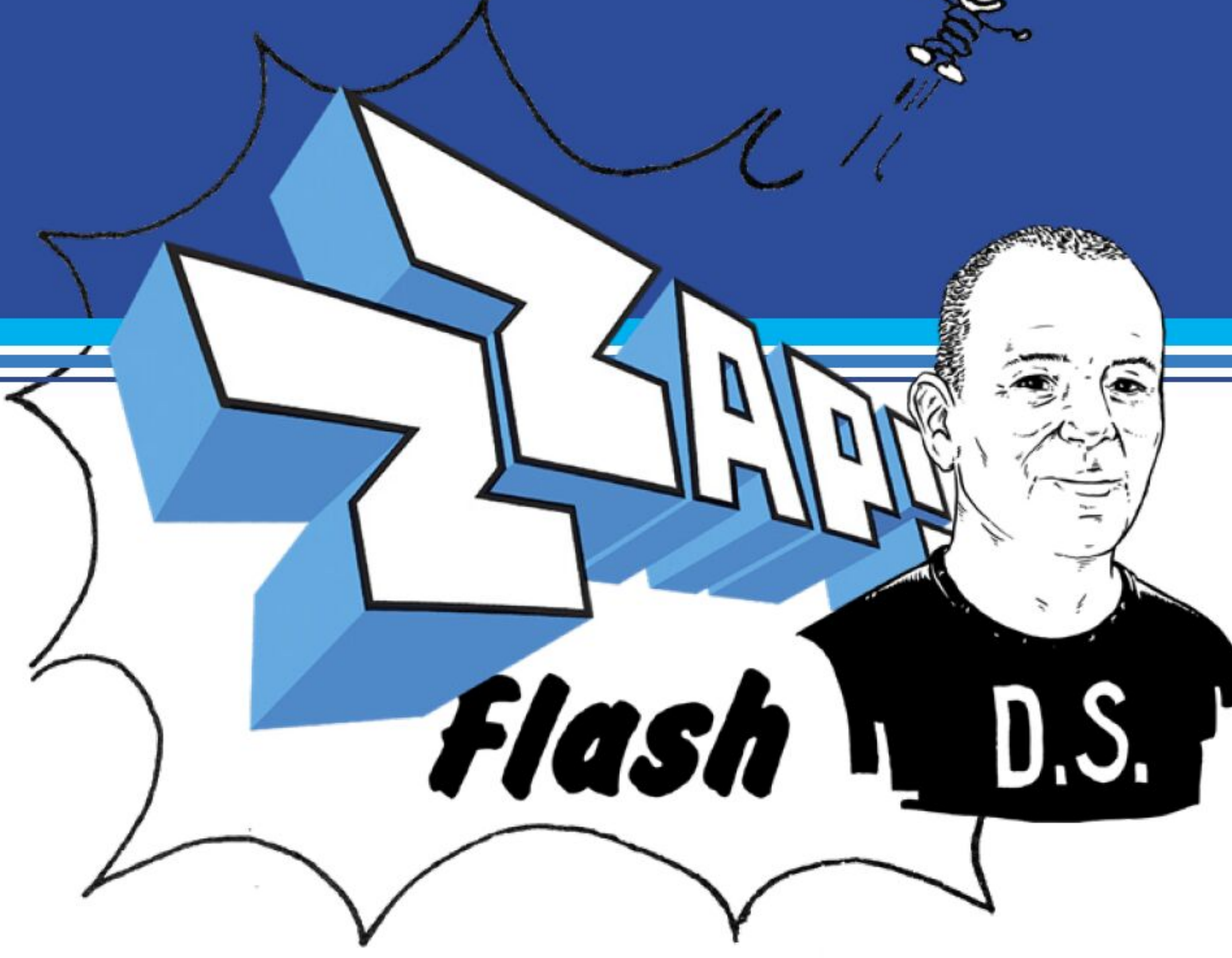
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 ZZAP! Flash D.S.

GHOSTLY GROG

Avast ye landlubbers! *Bone Dry* is the captivating tale of a group of pirates shipwrecked on a cursed island inhabited by strange and inhospitable creatures, all under the rule of a feared and elusive queen.



Having settled on the most hospitable part of the island for two centuries, the captain of this ghostly crew, who

has been battling depression due to his perceived responsibility for leading his crew into the fate of restless souls, must now embark on a perilous journey. This expedition is prompted by an unpleasant surprise: the theft of all the treasures amassed during their career, most notably the precious rum reserve.

Bone Dry draws its primary inspiration from the *Monster World* series on SEGA consoles, infused with elements reminiscent of *Knight 'n' Grail*, *Duck Tales* on NES, *Shovel Knight*, and a narrative approach influenced by modern indie productions. The game will offer multiple gaming sessions, with a map roughly six times larger than that of *Lester*.



But gamers, brace yourselves for a bit of a wait – this gem won't be ready to set sail until at least 2025, if that. But, keep your controllers at the ready, for *Bone Dry* is charting a course to be a chart-topper.

Seems even ghost pirates can't escape the tides of time. We'll update you in the year twenty-twenty-pieces-of-eight when it's - ahem - shipshape.



SERIOUSLY STRETCHY SPEEDWAY

Elasto Mania 64 is a port by **Zoltán Tobler** of the 2000 classic, which delves into the everyday concept of elastic motorcycles. It's like popping a wheelie in a rubber band factory.

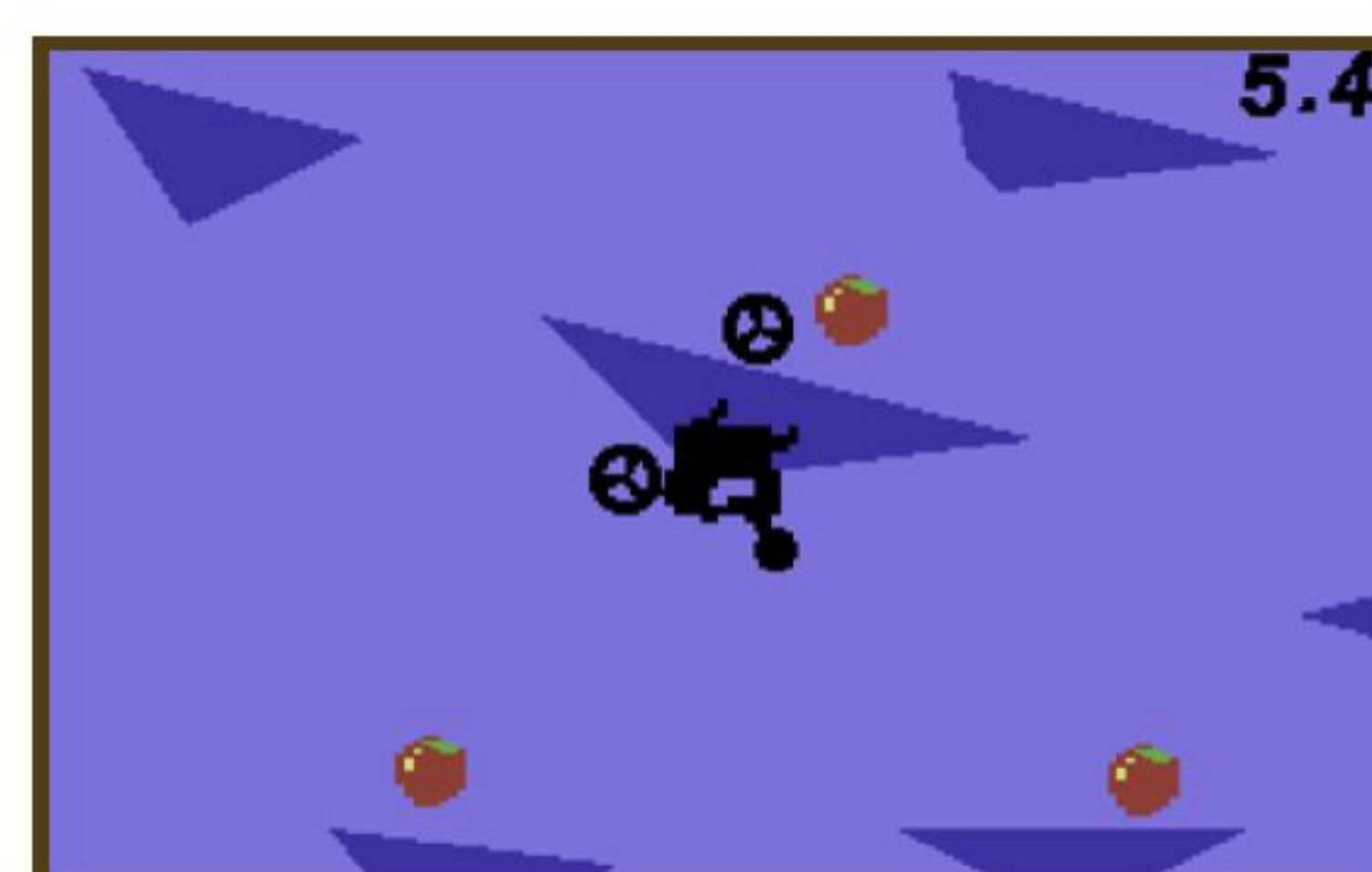
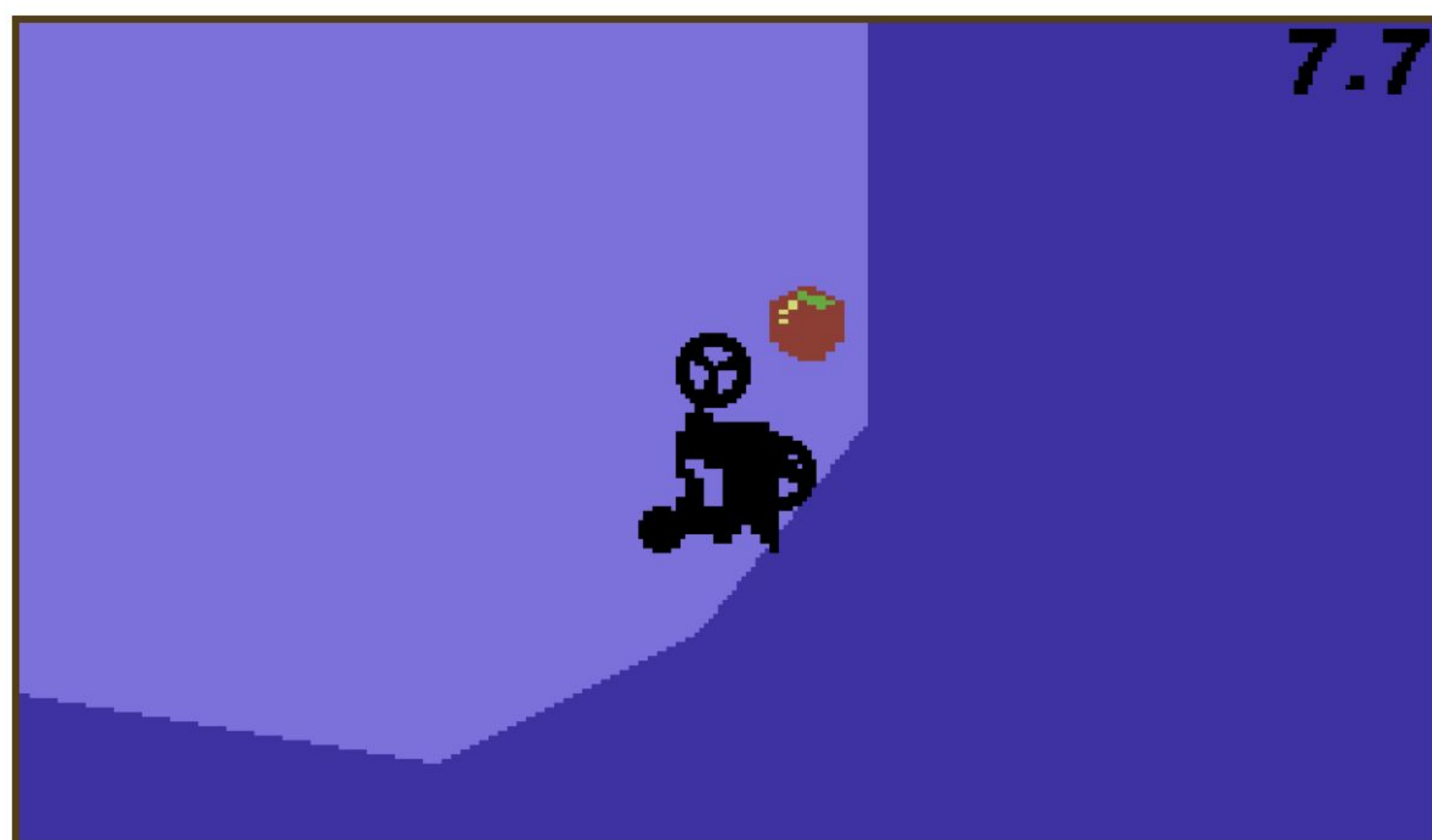
Regarding the idea behind this project, Zoltán shared his enthusiasm for the original *Elasto Mania* on the PC; a game he had been playing and setting world records for. His passion revved up, he's shifted gears to give us a C64 masterpiece, driven by nostalgia and a need for speed.

Working without the source code for the original, Zoltán reverse-engineered the physics by observation and painstakingly fine-tuned parameters for the C64 version. In addition to completing the full game, the developer plans to release a map editor for Windows,



allowing users to create their own maps for the game.

His journey into developing for the C64 is, in part, a personal exploration of what he might have achieved with greater knowledge and experience when he first started programming as a teenager. Now, he's - ahem - stretching that curiosity to its limits with *Elasto Mania 64*!




 ZZAP!
Flash

SNK VS. CAPCOM'S RETRO RUMBLE REDUX

RetroGL aka Gianluca Alberico celebrated the release of *SNK vs. CAPCOM* on the C64. However, he's not resting and has announced *SNK vs CAPCOM - Stronger Edition*; packing a punch with 16 additional characters, bringing the total to a whopping 32 characters. Sounds like a riot.



These new characters include BBHood, Dan, Evil Ryu, Morrigan, Sakura, Violent Ken, Cammy, and Lucia (Final Fight 3) from the CAPCOM side, and Akari, Athena, Haohmaru, Kyo, Nakoruru, Rugal, Yuri,



and Yashiro from the SNK side. But here's the twist! The Stronger Edition will be exclusively available on the cutting-edge Magic Desk 2 cartridge, capable of storing up to a whopping 2 megabytes of gaming goodness. No other cartridge or disk formats are in the cards, thanks to the intricacies of the game engine's design.

As for the release date, it's as elusive as a high score in a tough-as-nails shoot 'em up, building up the buzz and suspense for this epic showdown to come.

YOU CAN NEVER BE 2 TURBO



RetroGL is also hard at work on another exciting project - *Super Street Fighter 2 Turbo*. This version of the game will feature all 17 fighters from the original arcade release and is designed to squish into just a measly 1 megabyte EasyFlash cartridge this time.

But wait, there's more! The game engine is flexing its muscles, nearly nailing every high-kick and Hadouken, though a few moves are still waiting in the wings, needing a bit of tech wizardry to make the leap from arcade to cartridge.

Additionally, the *SNK vs. CAPCOM* stages are currently being used solely for demonstration purposes. One of the most challenging aspects of the project is the refinement of the sprites, as they are automatically converted using one of RetroGL's big tools.

As for the release date, it remains as cloaked in mystery as a ninja in the night, keeping us all on the edge of our slightly damp seats.





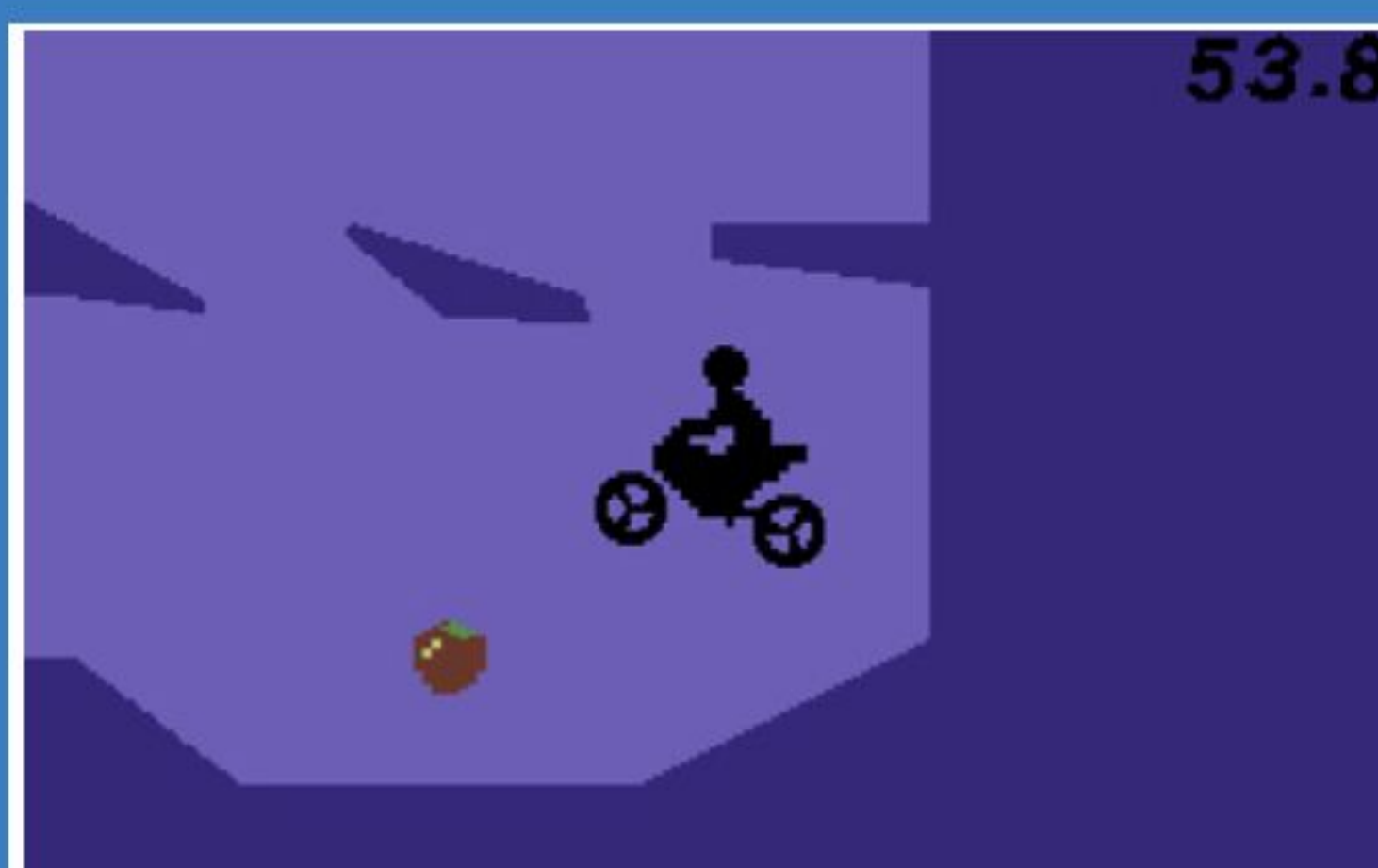
COVERMOUNT MADNESS

It's madness I tell ya! The ZZAP! 64 covermount has delivered literally tens of exclusive brand-new games since its inception! Brace yourself for another electrifying cache of brand-new, exclusive C64 gems in Covermount 17. Prepare to be diskazzled!



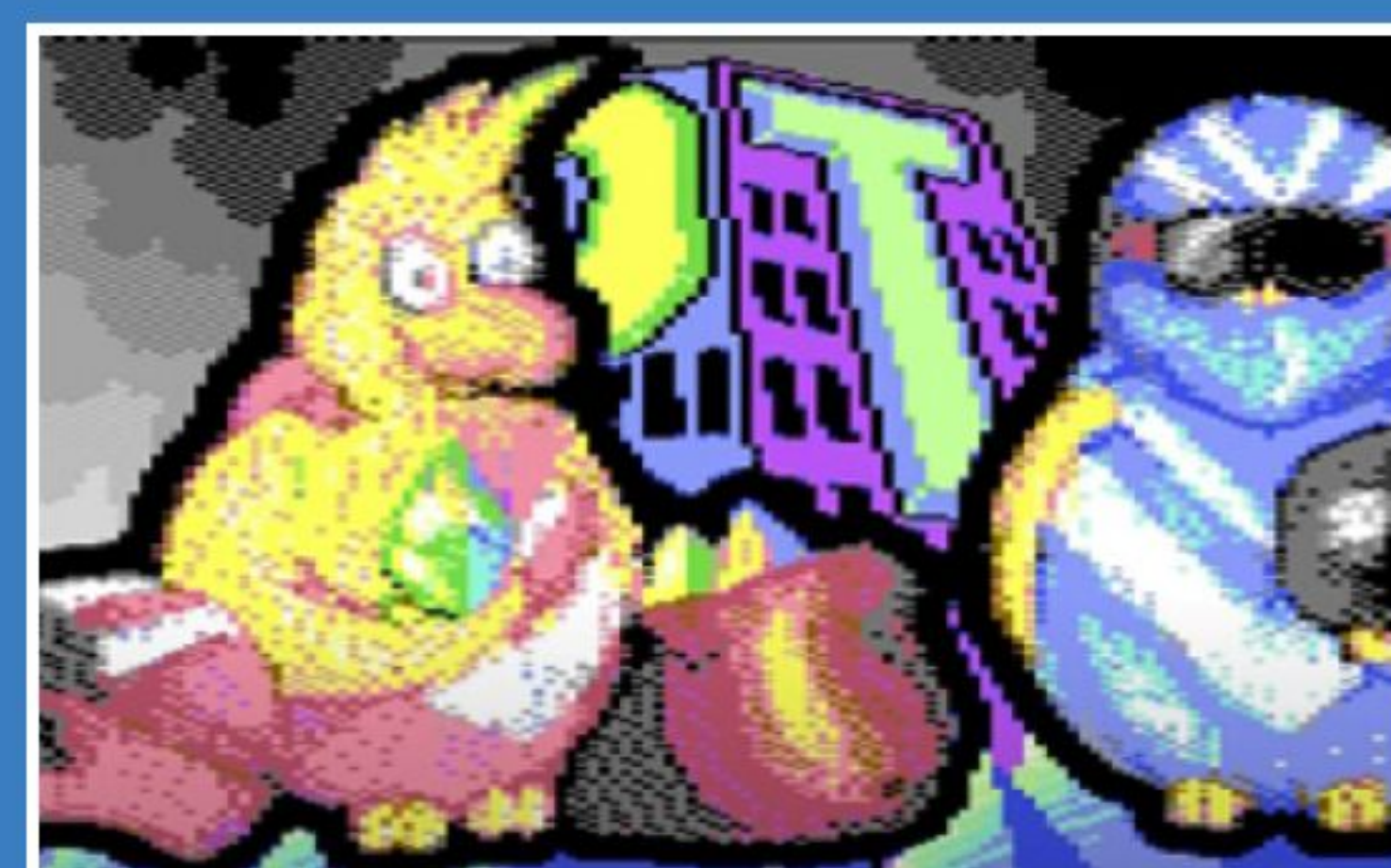
Roguebot drmortalwombat

In the 1960s, NASA spotted a mysterious object approaching Earth, projected to collide in 60 years. Intercepted signals suggested it was intentionally directed. Hush-hush to avoid worldwide alarm, NASA deployed a robot, armed to its metallic teeth, on a top-secret mission to take down what they dubbed the 'seven wizards'.



Elasto Mania 64 Level 3 Demo Zoltán Tobler

Aka *Elma*, this Y2K motorcycle simulation game is being ported to the C64. We went into its 'elastic motorcycles' in Newsflash so bounce over there for a read. The objective in each level is to reach and touch a flower, obviously *[a touch of romance eh? – Ed]*. And equally obviously some levels require you to collect scattered apples before reaching the flower *[that'll take some core-dination – Ed]*.



Penguin Tower Problemchild Productions

The parrots lived happily in their quaint village until something peck-uliar happened: White flakes fell from the sky, a phenomenon entirely new to parrotland. The newcomers called themselves "Penguins". The parrot king plucked two courageous subjects, Dinsdale and Ruby, to venture into the *Penguin Tower*. Can you ascend to the highest floor and peng-win?



Rocky & Co Xmas Demo ICON64/Psytronik Software

Rocky Memphis has discovered the entrance to the lost temple of the great King Ku. However, this time he will need help to solve the puzzles and find the fabled GOLDEN CONDOM - a beautiful golden statue which once adorned the King's... Wait, that's GOLDEN CONDOR, sorry. *[I once got those mixed up too. Talk about pecker pain. – Ed]*



Blastopia DX SE The New Dimension

In 2092, an alien ship appeared. Attempts to communicate and trade failed, leading the aliens to abduct camels from worldwide zoos and farms before fleeing to eight different planets. You embark on a rescue and destruction mission across these alien worlds. Best of luck on your journey! Just don't get the hump en route.



"I'M READY FOR YOU,
GOLDEN CONDOR"

Previous covermounts are available with silver membership here fusionretrobooks.com/pages/membership-bookshelf and via subscribing here patreon.com/zzapmagazine



OUR LEGENDARY REVIEW SYSTEM

As Alan Partridge once said, nobody does it better. From SIZZLERS with sass to reviewer threesomes, you saw it all here first back in the 1880s. But in case you were just fired then rehired as CEO of a major tech firm, here's how we think it works, and who they think they are:

Most games have THREE experienced reviewers, avoiding a skewed result due to one berk's quirks.

The point: Learn which reviewer shares YOUR tastes and you'll know if a game is worth spending your time or hard-earned dosh on.

Every game is played and loved long time. Once the Army called at ZZAP! Towers to see why the lights were still on at 3am. "Sorry Sarge, we have to finish this review for reader Marvin!". (The reviewers were famously shot and Marvin was exiled to Amsterdam. Damn.)

Ratings are constructively HONEST. Posts on something called The Internet say, "Don't give any new games low scores!". We say "wHaT a UsefUl mAg ThAt'D bE". BUT we appreciate how amazing it is that any games are out for a 40 year-old pooter & respect ANYONE who creates them.

Our reviewers meet up to argue for four months every two months about every score printed, and will defend their decision with army surplus water pistols. Come over after 3am.

"QUITE THE MOTLEY CREW - AREN'T THEY?"



That said, we know we can't please all the personages all the time. We'd all do well to accept that simply, TASTES DIFFER. And that's what you'll find here. Taste. Here let's prove it:

Andrew Fisher

Original Commodore Force contributor, Retro Gamer mag regular, C64 author, and C64 musician.

This month:

Recovering from major surgery and coping with a laptop failure, getting vaccinated, and enjoying the latest Richard Osman novel - as well as nearing the end of writing his latest C64 book.

Robin Hogg

Hubby to mega retro and horror collector Shelly, plane breaker, and ex-tipster slash flight sim pilot at ZZAP! Towers.

This month:

Back to TotK and looking forward to a nice long Xmas break to enjoy it. Maybe even try to learn SketchUp for some papercraft designs I've had bubbling along for an eternity.

Mat Allen (aka Mayhem)

Original ZZAP! 64 contributor, #1 cart collector, and part of the GameBase64 preservation project.

This month:

Rejoicing at how well Little Miss Chaos is taking to primary school, but on the flip side, enduring some utterly despicable wet weather and more unwanted funerals - it really does make you want to stick a fork in 2023 and call it done.

Paul Morrison

Former MAME record holder and unsuccessful ZZAP! job applicant who finally made it, just like Newcastle qualifying for the Champions League.

This month:

I'm a cowboy... on a stee-l horse I riide. Been replaying Red Dead Redemption in spare moments, and playing the Atari Recharged games for a Fusion article.

Christian Simpson

Writer with a love of retro gaming so problematic he had to start a YouTube. Made Commodore retro music before it was retro.

This month:

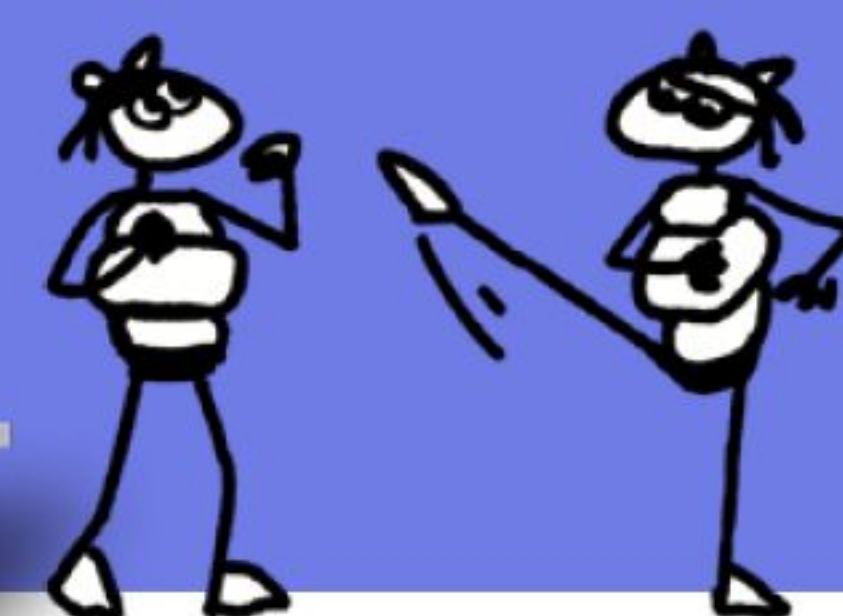
Been searching for the truck from Duel on YouTube then nearly dying in the process. Oddly, not at the hands of the truck driver but at the foot (paw?) of a bee. Buzz off!



COVER
ART-ICLE

SNK

CAPCOM



"I SHOULD GIVE
MYSELF A BREAK"

Price: \$ free | digital

Developer: RetroGL (2023)

Link: on.mom/uQaV



Kick, punch, it's all in the mind. Welcome to the tournament of the century, as Vega and Geese Howard team up trying to create the world's greatest (evil) army of warriors. Who will you pick to stop them? Who will be your rival? Will Guile have enough hair spray to keep his quiff upright? Can Mai's boobs get any bouncier?

Why am I continuing to ask these inane

questions? All these things and more will be answered as soon as you hit that power switch.

SNK vs Capcom is a faithful port of the Neo Geo Pocket Color title *Match of the Millennium*, featuring sixteen of the original game's characters but at the same time adapting everything to the Commodore's capabilities. Supporting both one and two button controllers, regular moves are performed by a combination of direction and

button(s), with special moves requiring a series of joystick motions before pressing a button. Hello Ken! How are you Ken?!

When you are ready, there is a choice of three fighting modes. Story mode sees you battling nine different AI opponents with bonus stages aplenty on route to facing down the evil duo of Vince Vega and Goose from *Top Gun*. Now that *would* be a game. Versus lets you trade blows with another human opponent or enable





TEST



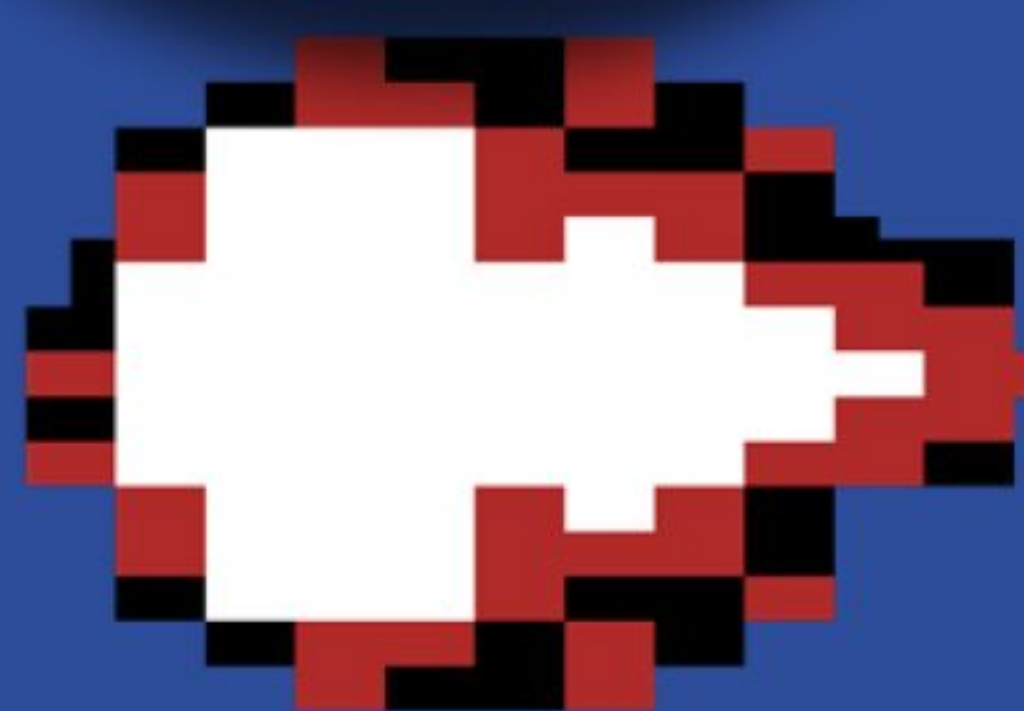
FIGHT

training mode, allowing you to hone those special and super move combinations to perfection.

Finally Tournament mode sees eight players face off in a one round sudden death knockout to determine the winner. So what are you waiting for, dust off your best keikogi and crack some skulls...

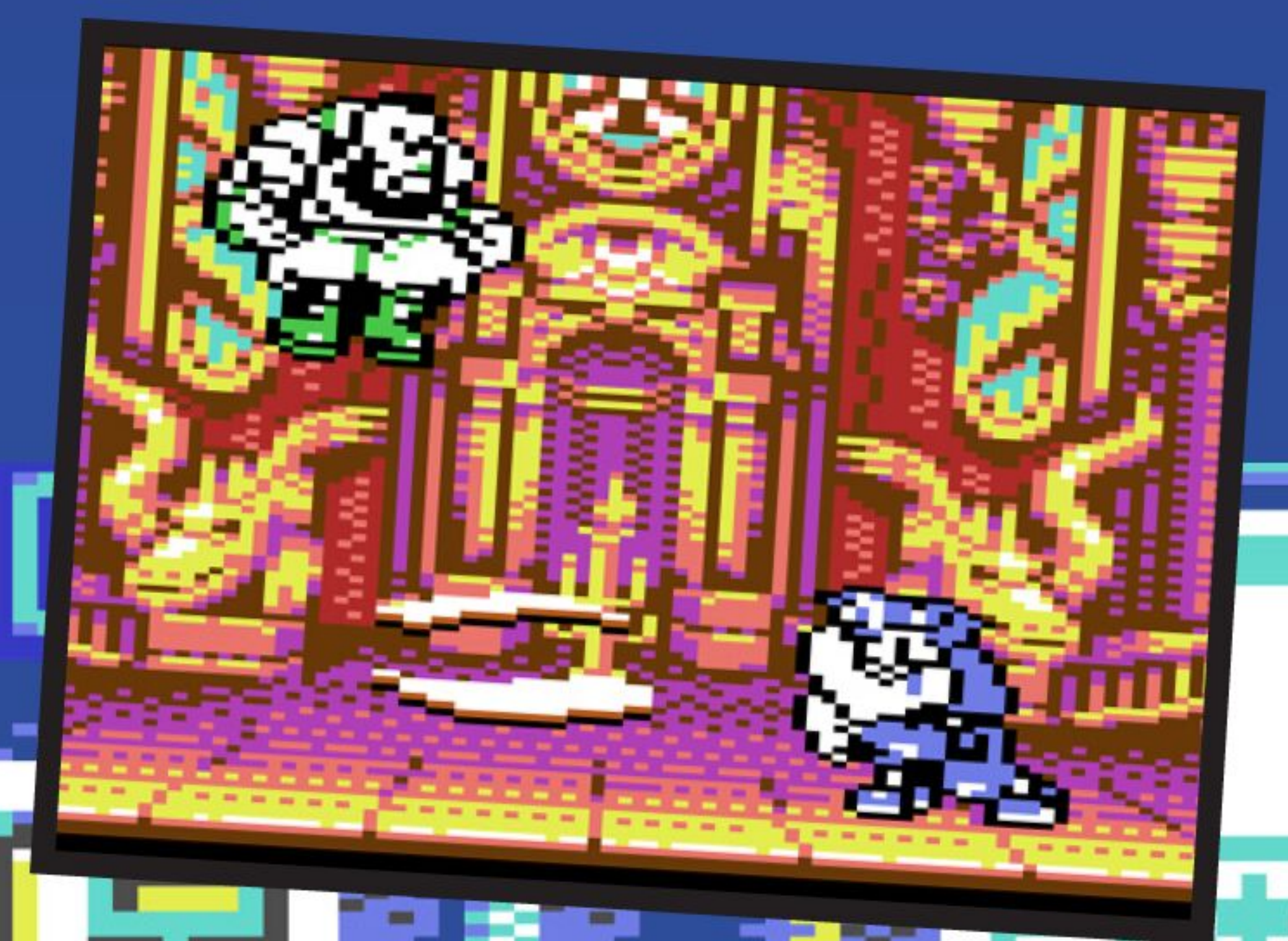
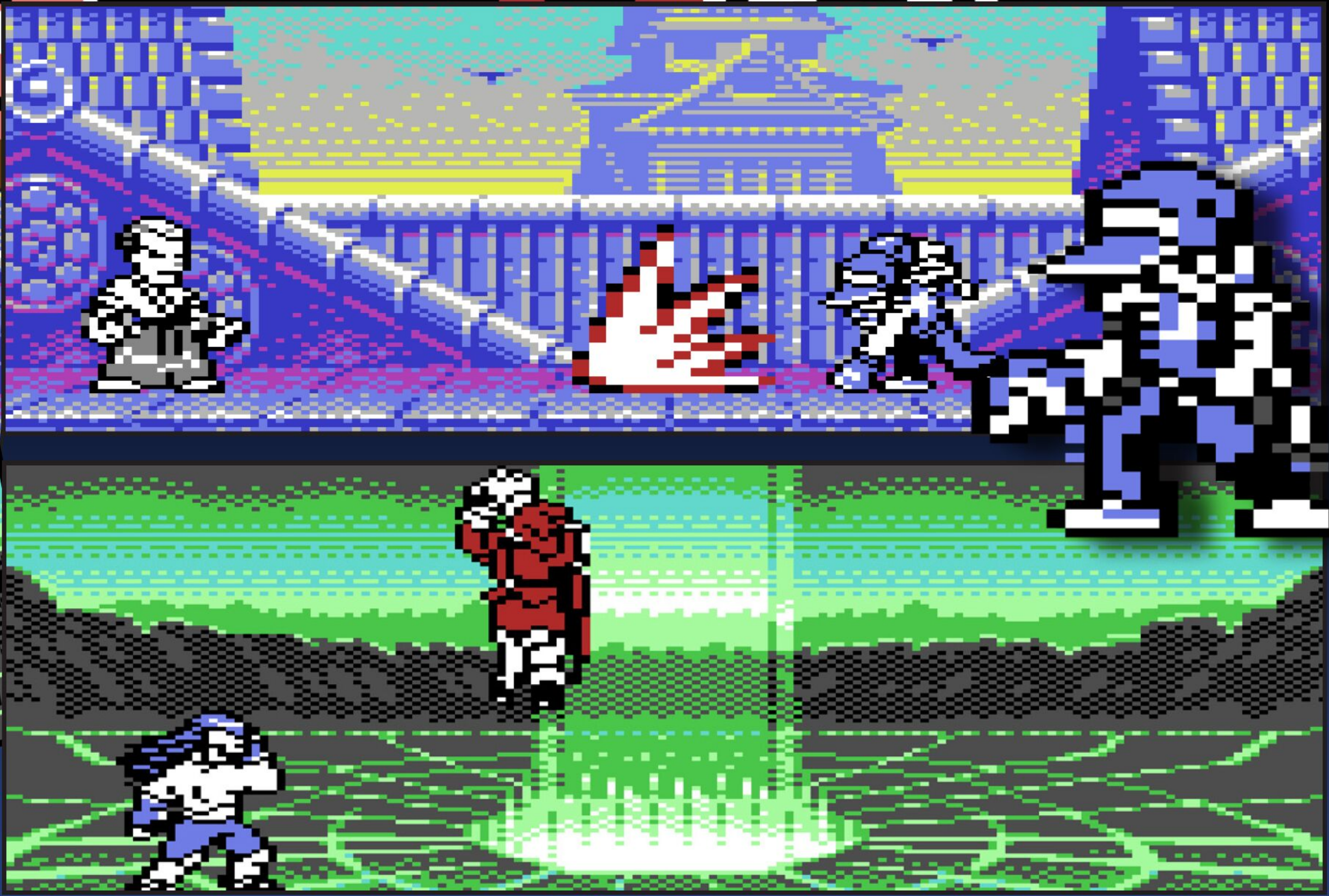
Our link and QR code take you to info on update #1 of this game – the version reviewed here – but there are further updates promised which may be available by the time this review goes to print, so subscribe to RetroGL's YouTube channel!

This is a long awaited titanic clash of two major franchises on the C64 and it delivers it in style. Right from the start with the arcade intro you know you've got a hit on your hands. Plenty of fighters to choose from with their unique styles, a host of options including the classic story mode and tournament mode, and even an attract mode showing the moves you can make. That last one is a lovely touch that really gives it an arcade vibe. I'm a lover not a seasoned fighter and found the differences in difficulty level a little blurred but it sure played well; the gameplay was fast and fluid and it felt great to get the timing right and connect fist with face. I can see a huge challenge here that I could really get into with a bit – okay a lot of practice. A superb fighter that will make you forget those catastrophic Capcom conversions of the '80s.





"I'M NOT SHORYUKEN HANDLE THIS"



Despite being a massive Commodore fan [you're not that big mate – Ed], the NGPC is pretty special to me (witness my gaming shelves!) so given the play time put into *Match of the Millennium*, there was only one word to describe launching this: trepidation. Thankfully, that was put to bed minutes into taking said thoroughbred for a ride. The sheer amount of content is staggering: sixteen characters, all those moves, all those animation frames, barely any drop in speed; stunning. But it's not perfect. Update 1 improved some timing issues with certain moves and fixed a few bugs, partly on feedback from players including myself, with plenty of scope for further tweaking, and on balance you will get much more from it using a two-button controller. While *IK+* still rules the traditional fighter roost, what is presented here is undeniably an incredible achievement, something I thought I'd never see, with SNK's handheld perfect source foil material.

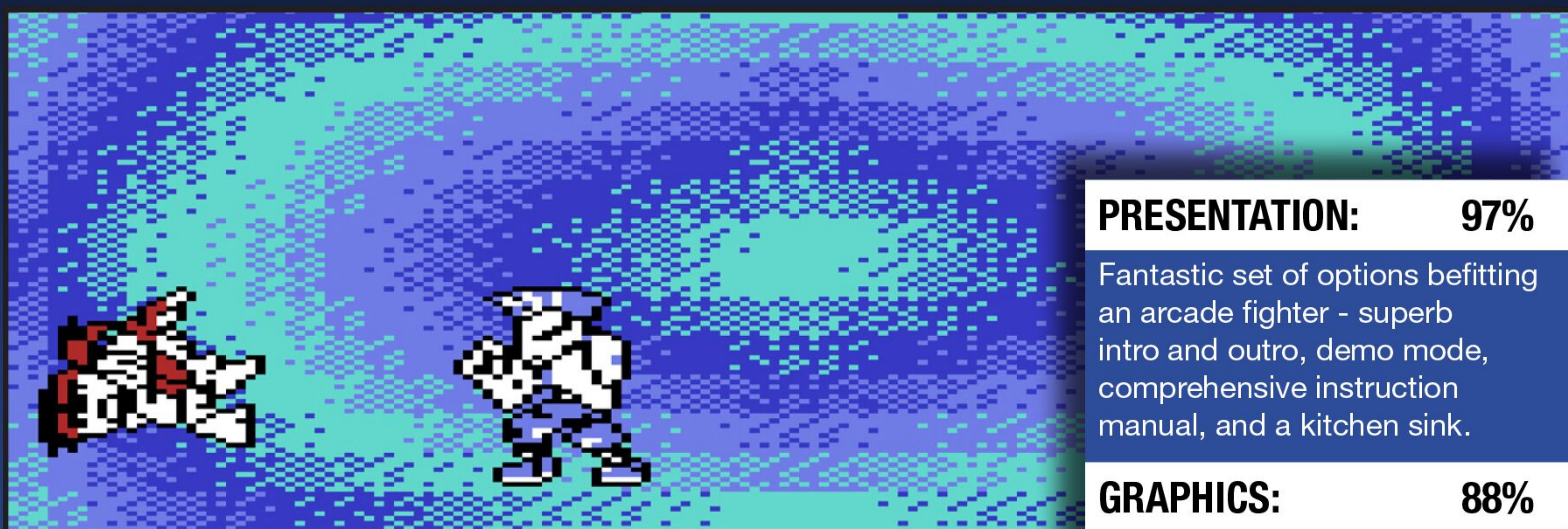




YOU LOSE



TEST



Man, it took me some effort to get the two-button version of this working, but I'm glad I finally did! I really am beyond impressed. There have been so many disappointing fighting games on the C64, with limited move sets and easily-defeated opponents, that it's truly refreshing to play one that's as deep and challenging as this. Okay, it uses the cartridge format, but I'm still amazed at what's been crammed in. The characters all have multiple special moves, and it's great to see, for example, Chun-Li launch into her fabled Spinning Bird Kick on the 64, with fireballs flying all over the place. It really is thrill-a-minute stuff. Find a character you click with to start with (Felicia was good for me) and get stuck into the C64's most extraordinary fighting game.



PRESENTATION: 97%

Fantastic set of options befitting an arcade fighter - superb intro and outro, demo mode, comprehensive instruction manual, and a kitchen sink.

GRAPHICS: 88%

Very nice backdrops which take you back to those halcyon days in the arcades, with stylistically clever sprites moving at a solid frame rate.

SOUND: 82%

Great variety of tunes (composed in two voices) to accompany the fisticuffs with decent FX.

HOOKABILITY: 94%

No messing, straight into the fight and everything executes so smoothly.

LASTABILITY: 95%

A formidable challenge awaits with sixteen different characters and bragging rights for Versus mode victories.

OVERALL 95%

Superb port for the humble breadbin. A few more tweaks and it'd be BLACK BELT GOLD MEDAL worthy.



Mike Quarter, Present Sorter

Price: \$ donation | digital

Developer: Arlagames (2022)

Link: on.mom/aKhz



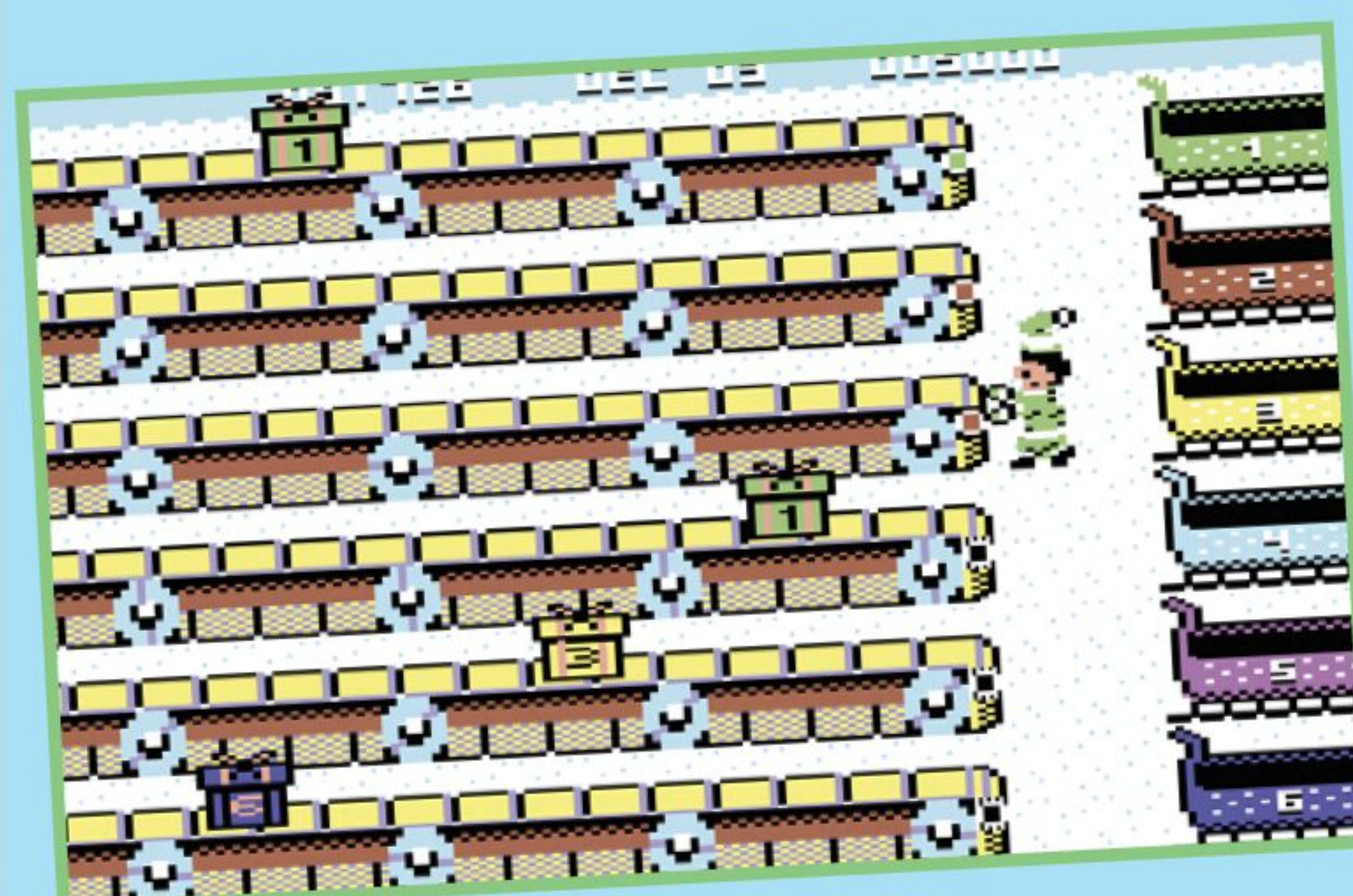
Mike Quarter may well be a present sorter (with the kind of name you'd expect you'd see in Viz, not ZZAP! 64), but clearly he's the distant cousin of our old friend, *Tapper*. His job is a much harder one: Presents fly in faster than pints at a pub, there are no dancing girls to liven things up, and don't even think about Christmas tips. What a life!

The factory has six conveyor belts, but in these cash-strapped times, Mike is the only employee available to cover them. Fortunately, the present makers wrap the gifts in numbered packages, with each number corresponding with a present sleigh behind Mike. He must run up and down the line of conveyor belts and collect a present when it reaches the end, then take it to the appropriate sleigh and lob it in, just like an Amazon pro before Unionisation.



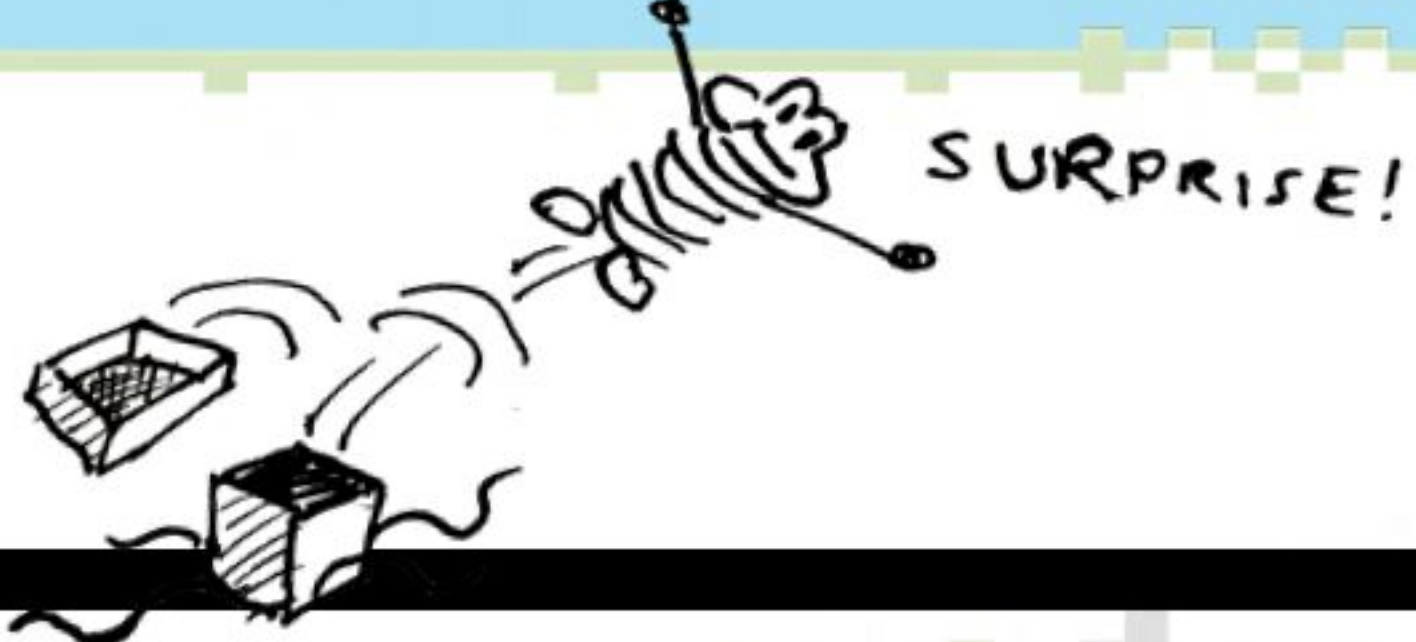
We weren't able to fit this into our Christmas stocking (pages) last winter, but what would Christmas be without a bit of re-gifting? *Mike Quarter* gets right into the spirit of Christmas, with a poor worker run off his feet trying to do the work of three-to-six people over the festive season. It's a more frantic and more difficult version of its forbearer, and you'll find games are very short, but Yule still press fire to get right back into it though [*hohoho, tree-mendous!* – Ed]. I can't be too critical because this is intended to be a fun little game for Christmas and, just like Mike, it does its job nicely. Well worth a few plays this festive season.

Each conveyor belt has a pause button, so if things are getting too frantic, Mike can hit these for a moment of respite. That may cause more harm than good though, as it's even harder to deal with a present pile-up, like Aldi at Xmas. Should Mike allow a present to fall from the conveyor belt, it will break and Christmas will be ruined... not just for the poor child whose toy it was, but also for Mike – who will find himself jobless. Merry Christmas ya filthy animal!

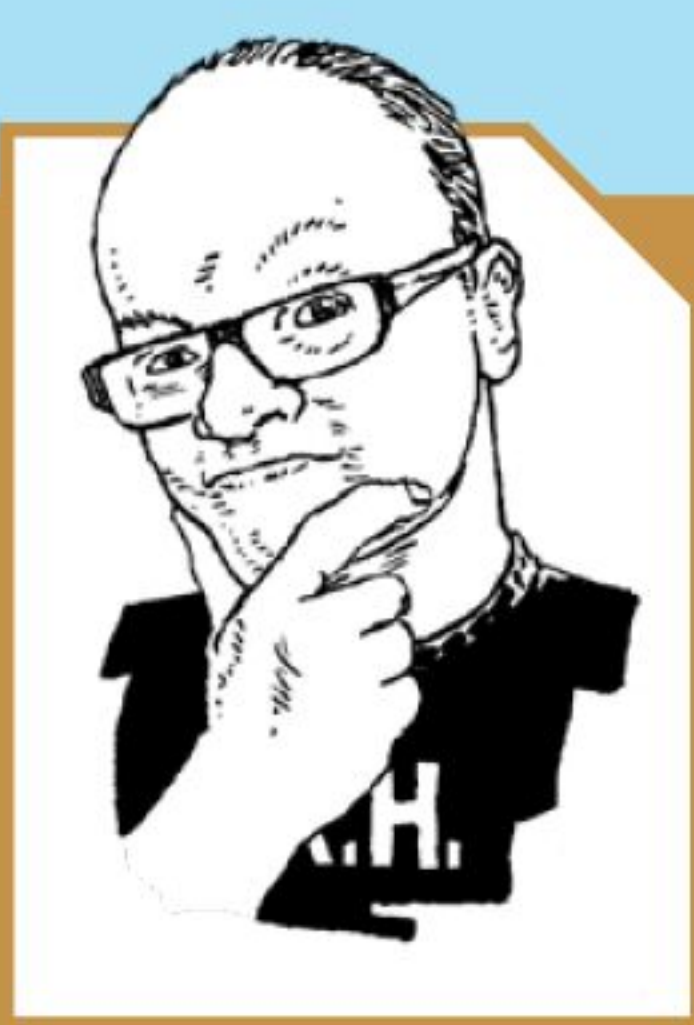
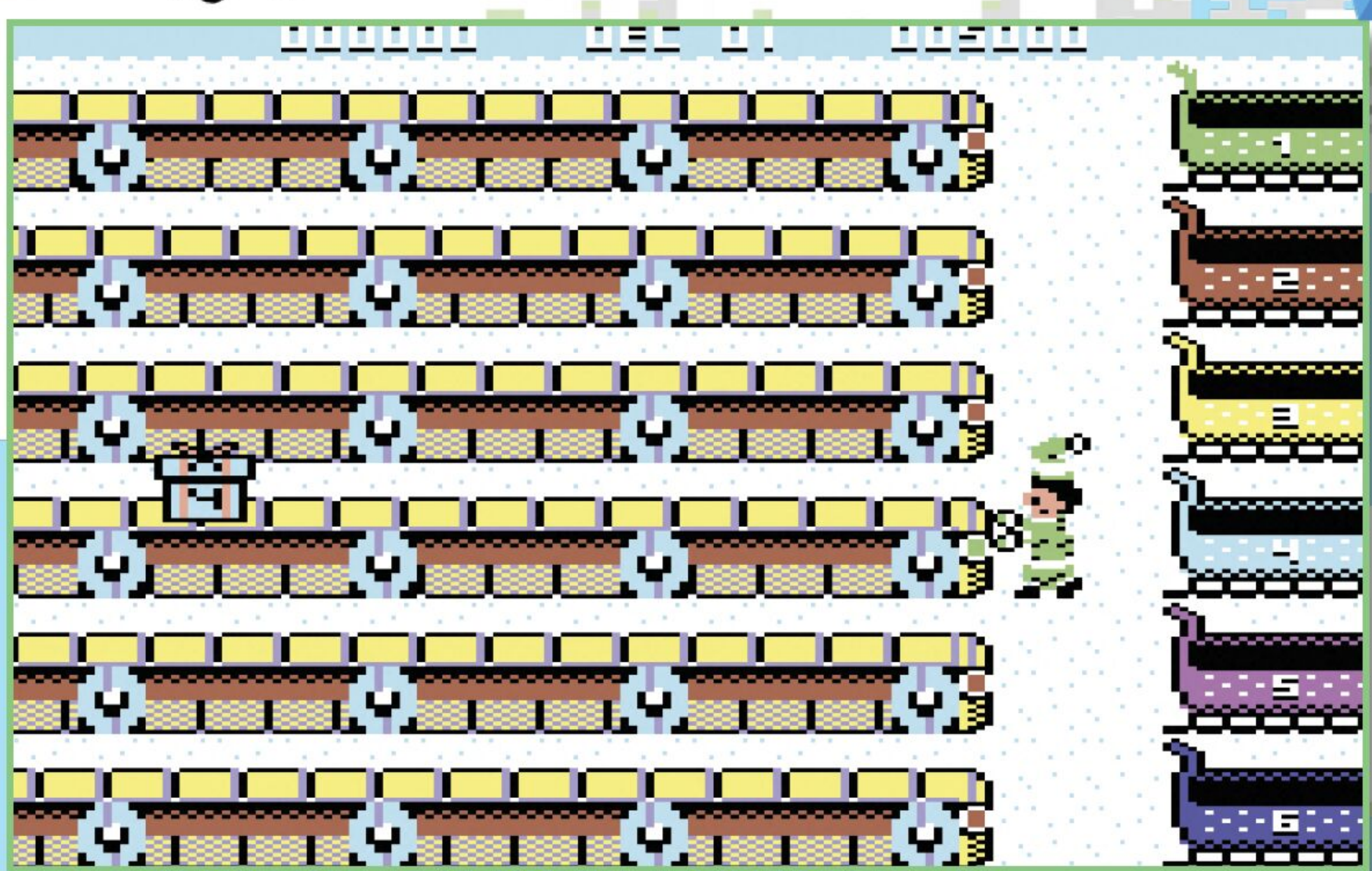


"NORTH POLE PRIME: FREE SLIPPING AND MISHANDLING"





TEST



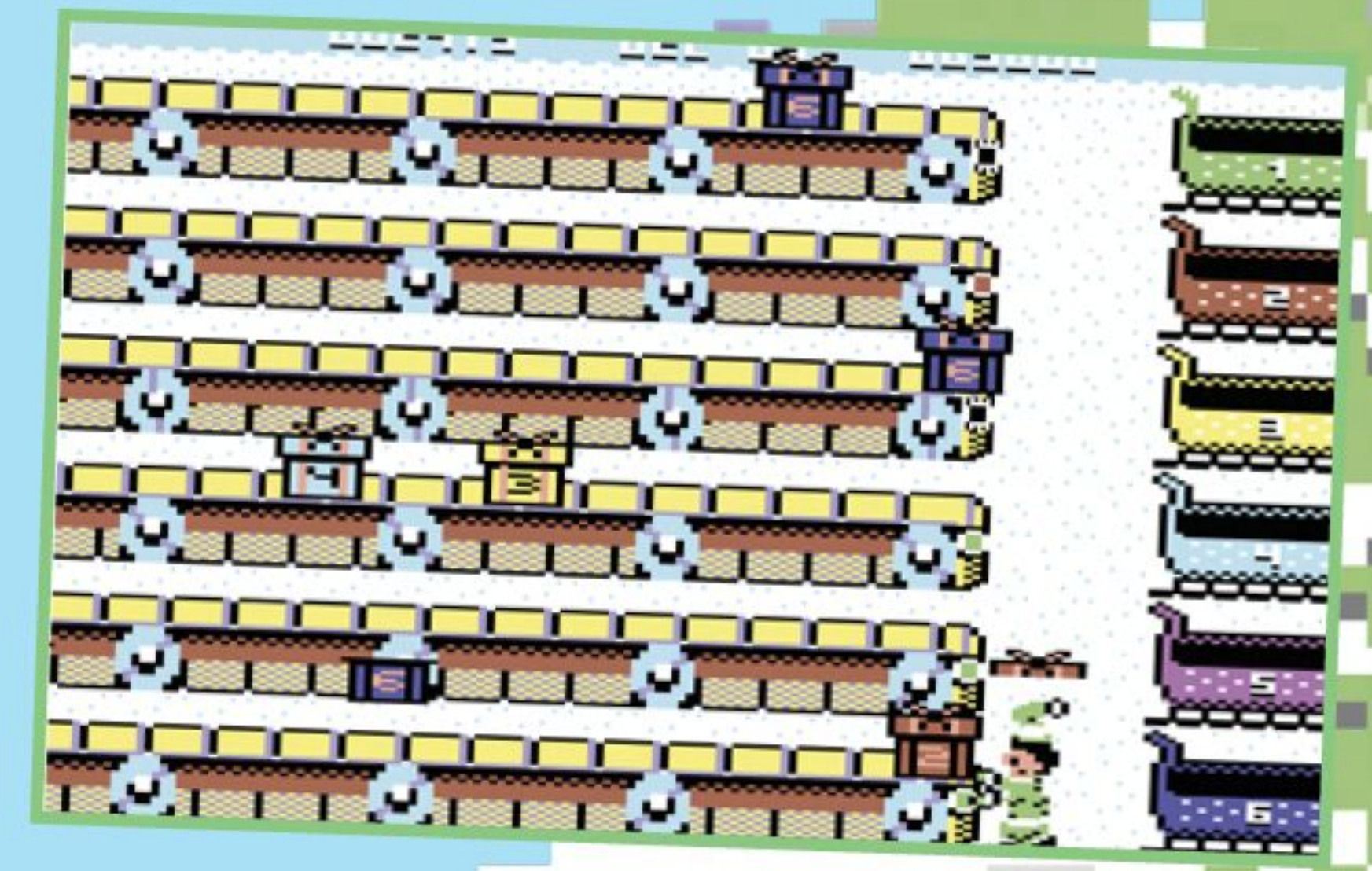
Is it still called seasonal work if the season you're

in lasts all year when you're working at Santa's North Pole Xmas pressie production facility? Such things I began to ponder in between a deluge of presents while playing this. Not that I got much time to ponder, the onslaught is never ending and it's guaranteed I will never get to Dec 25th, even with some incredibly last second saves. It's times like this that I wished I was in *Tapper* where I could have a sneaky pint. This is a decent variant on that style of game, with bright colours and constant tension. It makes for a simple, but nicely done mini-game.



Ah, *Tapper*. Just replace Budweiser with presents

and the server with a short guy in a pointy hat. If I was Mike, I'd be reporting Santa to Elf and Safety for being the only one on duty [*Santastic! – Ed*], but them's the breaks – at least it simulates the Christmas retail period perfectly. While the mechanic to stop the conveyor belts make it different to its inspiration, it actually makes life harder at times because you can't speed them up to compensate! Old bar steward could at least run down and collect the empties before they got to him. Your early games are liable to be short (as you just get the one life), and only then get progressively longer. Ish. Still, worth a crack(er) this festive period.



PRESENTATION:	55%
Nice title, clean layout, no options.	
GRAPHICS:	70%
Mike's a chunky-looking chap, but everything looks festive.	
SOUND:	69%
A jaunty version of Slade's Christmas classic accompanies Mike's efforts. But no wrap music.	
HOOKABILITY:	79%
Knit one, purl one, drop one, oops game over.	
LASTABILITY:	63%
Mike last about a Quarter as long as the turkey/nut roast. [<i>Do Turkeys have nuts? – Ed</i>]	

OVERALL 67%

An amusing game for your Christmas sack.



Welcome back to the wild and wacky universe of ZZAP! 64! In each episode, we zero in on a single game, delving into its story as told in the sacred pages of our beloved C64 magazine. From early glimpses to full-on reviews, Graeme Mason is our treasure hunter, scouring the archives to dig up every tantalizing titbit ZZAP! shared about each title. This round, our subject is the brilliant shoot-'em-up *Sanxion*, the first game from Newsfield's sister company, Thalamus.



The Game

In *Sanxion*'s somewhat oblique plot, aliens have infiltrated the Earth and are busy manipulating it towards nuclear annihilation. So just like real life then. Or, because humanity's technology is improving at an incredible pace, and the galaxy's rulers are worried that if humans are let loose on the universe, chaos will reign. When the alien

observer is discovered, the Americans and Russians join forces to form Project Damocles, a think tank with one purpose: how to combat the inevitable alien invasion. This campaign, naturally, involves you jumping into a spaceship and taking on a horde of aliens – on your own. Surprise surprise! *[What's Cilla doing here? – Ed]*

News Flash

"A brand new software house called Thalamus has just announced the title of their first product – a shoot-'em-up called *Sanxion*," we proudly declared in issue 17's preview. There was no mention of Thalamus' connection to Newsfield. Oops. But no matter: *Sanxion* looked good, "simply stunning" in fact, and we were excited to see what the "Finnish unknown" *[not for long – Ed]* Stavros Fasoulas had in store for us.



THALAMUS

Thalamus In Despatches

R Watkins of Fairwater, Gwent, was on hand in issue 18 with some advice for Thalamus, which can be summarised in two ways: don't release any crap games, and keep the price low! Our Lloyd Mangram was typically pithy in his reply, emphasising how Thalamus operated separately from Newsfield and that its games would get precisely what they deserve in the hallowed pages of ZZAP! 64.

ON THALAMUS

Dear Lloyd,
I was pleased to hear that you are founding a new software house, namely Thalamus. I would like to take this opportunity to ask you to use your expert judgement and experience of computer games software when releasing games under the Thalamus label. Don't release anything not up to Sizzler standard. It would be a good idea to get your reviewers to put the games from Thalamus to the test.

Also try to keep the price of the games down. I don't know whether or not Thalamus is to release budget games — if not then a price of £6.50 would be fine. Try to avoid the infamous £9.95 price tags and unless you want to price yourself out of existence, don't go over £10 at any rate.

At the moment you are possibly thinking of not reviewing Thalamus games. I for one, and many others I'm sure, will not think you're biased if you give them good ratings.

Thalamus should remember not to write too many multi-load cassette-based games, disk-only games or 128-only games. The odd one or two are fine for those with a 128 or disk-drive, but the majority of readers are not blessed with such equipment.

Finally, I hope Thalamus is in good hands. After all, I don't want my favourite magazine to go bankrupt because of an error

by Thalamus which would cost Newsfield money. I'm expecting lots of Thalamus previews, interviews, etc, to enhance your already great magazine. Good Luck!

R Watkins, Fairwater, Cwmbran, Gwent

Well I can't comment on the handling, pricing or distribution of Thalamus products since it's not based here in Ludlow and is a separate company in any case. However, I do know something about game pricing these days. For a start off programmers want very high rates for the job these days and when that's taken into consideration with distribution and marketing costs, there's not much left from even the higher price tags. Budget game distribution has been handled in an entirely different way from 'normal' priced games, largely through the notoriously difficult newstrade outlets. This has been sown up by only two companies with any real success — Mastertronic and Firebird. Just think how many other so-called budget labels have appeared and vanished, simply because in the end there wasn't enough margin for software distributors to handle the product.

As for ZZAP!, we shall certainly be reviewing the first Thalamus game, Sanxion and if it deserves it, it'll be whatever it deserves to be. Your kind sentiments are passed onto Thalamus.

LM

The Review

Later in the same issue, our reviewers finally got their sweaty paws on the first Thalamus game. "This isn't the best thing since sliced bread", cautioned Julian Rignall, "but it's certainly a damn tasty uncut loaf." With *Sanxion's* lack of originality duly noted, the praise came thick and fast. "Sanxion is a dream to both watch and play — I think it's ace", proclaimed a happy Rich Eddy, while Gary Penn called the Thalamus game "a great shoot-'em-up with plenty of variety". Unsurprisingly, Rob Hubbard's stunning music also received great acclaim. But how would *Sanxion* stack up in the final verdict?

SANXION

Thalamus, £9.95 cassette, £14.95 disk, joystick or keys

East-West relations have always been based on mutual friendship. If one side does something to annoy or provoke the other then the relationship turns sour until the diplomats clear up the mess. The 'friendship' has steadily declined since the announcement of the Star Wars program, but when the Americans discovered that somebody had been tampering with their satellites, things went from bad to worse. With a complete breakdown of diplomatic relations, a worried world waited for the tensions to be pushed.

And then, a massive radio signal burst from the Arctic circle, attracting the attention of those about to start the Armageddon. A hasty investigation discovered that the signal had been transmitted from a crashed alien military craft. But by the time an expedition party arrived at the scene the alien was dead. Nevertheless, both body and craft were in a remarkably good condition and both were brought back to civilian areas for examination. Over the following months eminent scientists studied the craft and its contents, and began to learn and understand the alien technology. A breakthrough occurred when a computer

specialist managed to get the ship's on-board computer to function. Instantly, many professors of language were brought in to translate its records, a task which proved quite a simple one.

From this it was gleaned that the craft was from a large alien empire, worried about man's technological advances. They thought that within a hundred years or so mankind would pose a direct threat to their supreme domination — consequently, they had planned to bring about mankind's downfall by fooling with America's satellites, knowing that global nuclear conflict would result.

With this information both East and West realised their stupid mistake and an amnesty was signed. Now there was a second problem: Earth had been alerted to the presence of the alien force, and the force wanted to purge mankind... an alien invasion was imminent.

With the amnesty signed East and West started work on Project Demolisher, a global defence system to ward off the impending alien attack. Leading scientists were brought together to construct a fleet of ships based on the advanced alien technology, and within twelve months 'Operation Sanxion' was put into effect. The best pilots from all over the world were drafted into the newly formed Sanxion defence corps. They were taught how to fly the new breed of

planes so they could constantly patrol the planet.

The player is brought into the game weeks after the advent of Operation Sanxion. Playing the role of a Sanxion pilot you must constantly patrol your 'beat', ten sectors of Earth, and destroy any alien infiltrators.

Using a single direction horizontal scrolling format, Sanxion is a shoot 'em up which pits you against the marauding alien invaders. The screen is split into two sections: the main screen is the playing area, while at the top an impending attack scanner acts as a radar, alerting the pilot to alien presence before they come into visual contact.

The ship can increase and decrease its speed and also change altitude, done with logical movements of the joystick. Pressing the fire button releases laser bolts which destroys most alien craft on contact.

At the beginning of a game the player has a reserve of two ships, but if one comes into contact with an alien ship, or the debris when it explodes, then it's destroyed. Aliens are not lost, however, since an extra ship is awarded every 10,000 points.

Each sector has different features, but all have a Refuel station where skillful pilots have the opportunity to earn bonus points by partaking in a training session. Here the ship becomes invincible

There have been loads of shoot 'em ups recently and I don't mind admitting that I am bored with them. However, Sanxion is different. It seems much more than your run of the mill blaster. The graphics are great, and the superb parallel scrolling works a treat. The wobbly movement of the ship makes the game just that little bit more realistic. As well as fast shooting there's some really old puzzles on certain sections which will need plenty of practice to perfect. Sanxion is a dream to both watch and play — I think it's ace. With the added feature of the bonus section it really does stand superior above all other attempts to produce a game this addictive and playable.

The Advert

The ad jetted into issue 19, and what an exciting piece by our beloved Oliver Frey it was. An exquisitely designed spacecraft scurries across a metallic surface, pursued by enemy fighters, the angular title sitting beneath the action. A screenshot lay at the bottom, as did Stavros's name — Thalamus would forge a reputation for properly crediting the names behind the games.

THALAMUS

SANXION

By STAVROS FASOULAS

64 CASSETTE £9.95
DISK £14.95

THALAMUS LIMITED,
First Office,
1st Floor, Advance Works,
44 Watling Road, London NE1 1PQ

Distributed by US GOLD LIMITED, Unit 2/3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX

The Verdict

Sanxion's high scores for Graphics (98%) and Sound (97%) were inevitable following our reviewers' comments – but what perhaps would have pleased Thalamus and programmer Stavros Fasoulas more would have been our 96% score for Hookability, a testament to the superbly refined and varied gameplay of *Sanxion*. SIZZLER status was duly acquired, together with an overall score of 93%. "One of this year's better blasts", we sagely concluded.

Presentation 92%

Great loading screen and music. A few useful options, and a decent high score table.

Graphics 98%

Stunning parallax scrolling backdrops, great sprites and neat visual effects.

Sound 97%

The Rob Hubbard loading music is one of his best compositions; the title screen music and spot FX are also superb.

Hookability 96%

Immediately impressive and addictive.

Lastability 92%

Not overly varied but highly playable and compulsive.

Value For Money 88%

Forty levels of high speed, high quality action for your money.

Overall 93%

One of this year's better blasts.

Readers Awards

While popular with reviewers and readers alike, *Sanxion* was up against stiff competition in the 1986 Readers Awards. Subsequently, the Thalamus game failed to register in the Best Game Overall category and lost out to *Uridium* in the Best Shoot-'em-up round. Following another near-miss for Graphics, *Sanxion* finally gained a statuette for Best Music – due reward for Rob Hubbard's legendary ditty. "I shall endeavour to keep up the good work throughout 1987," declared the talented tunesmith.



Rob Hubbard: "Great news tha' . . . really nice. It's a great honour to be so popular with the ZZAP! readers. I shall endeavour to keep up the good work throughout 1987."

KNUCKLEBUSTERS

Melbourne House
(Rob Hubbard)

PARALLAX

Ocean
(Martin Galway)

GREEN BERET

Ocean
(Martin Galway)

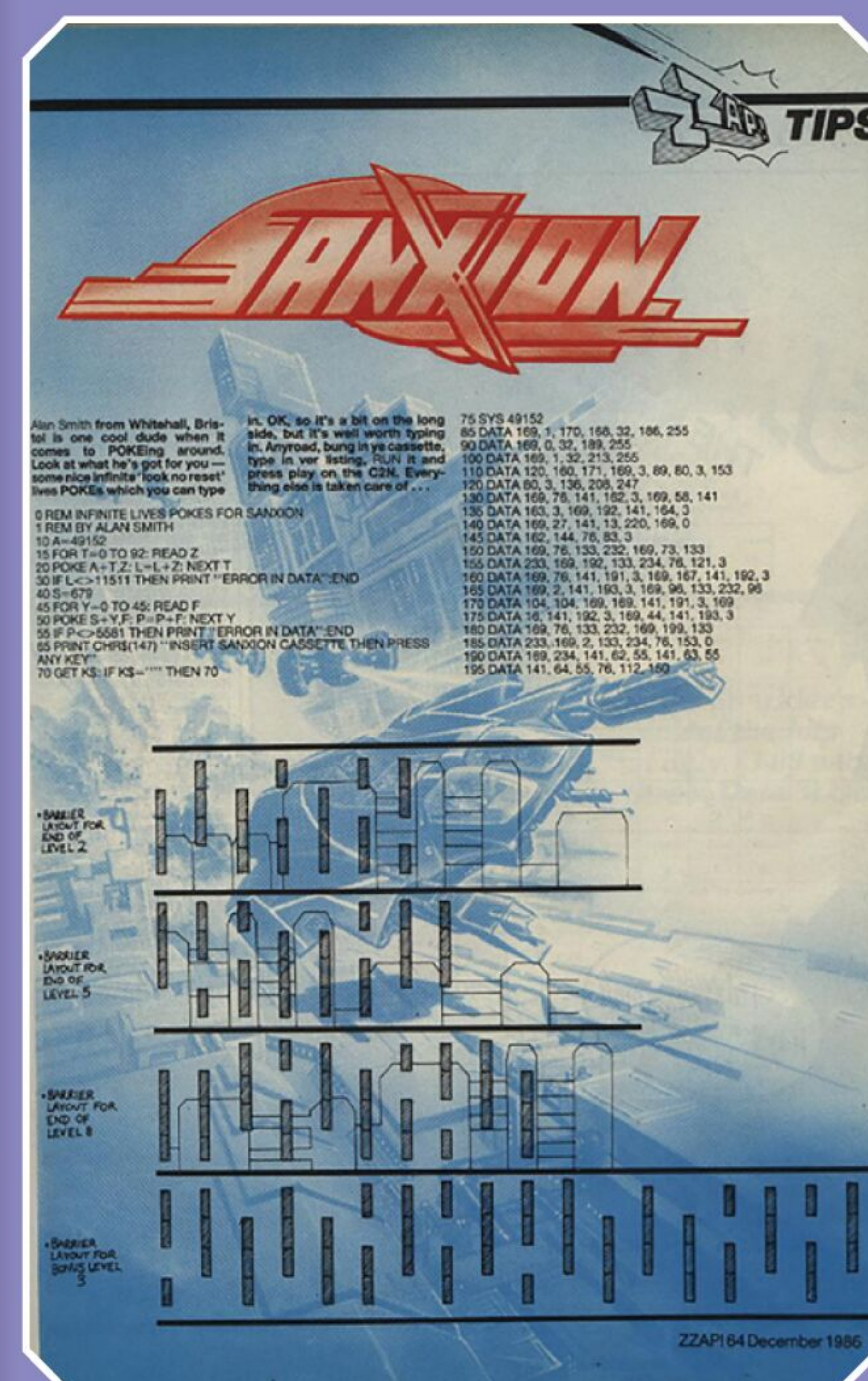
GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS

Elite
(Mark Cooksey)

1986 was undoubtedly a good year for Rob Hubbard. *Sanxion* collected 17% – twice as many votes as *Knucklebusters*, which clinched second place with 8.5%. Breathing down its neck though with 8%, was Martin Galway's *Parallax* soundtrack, followed by *Green Beret* with 5.5%. Mark Cooksey did well to come fifth with 5% for his *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* tunes, which just managed to hold off competition from *International Karate* and *Miami Vice*.

Help!

It wasn't long – one issue after our review – before the ZZAP! 64 readers were sending in tips and more for the popular shooter. One of Bristol's Alan Smiths sent in an infinite lives POKE, and there was a handy map detailing the location of the barriers in the main game and bonus stage. A full page of tips appeared an issue later.



Reviewers Challenge

Issue 21 brought the next Reviewers' Challenge across the Newsfield mags, and *Sanxion* was one of the four games featured. The aim was to score as many points as possible in ten minutes, and a slithering Penn was the top *Sanxion* shooter, notching 73,070 points within his allotted time. However, with the Scorelord declaring that points scored for 'home' games should not count, it wasn't enough to deny Crash's Ben Stone a stunning and controversial victory. Boo! Later that issue we teased news of Stavros Fasoulas's follow-up to *Sanxion: Delta*.

up to his name and sets out on the gruelling ride. He gets off to a decidedly shaky start, weaving all over the track, and is soon miles behind all the other riders. Even with no other riders in sight, the Cornish Pixie seems to be suffering from clotted reflexes and has severe difficulty remaining on the track.

Eventually he catches up. He keeps nudging other bikes repeatedly yet manages to make his way to 33rd place at one stage during the second lap. Disaster strikes: he hits several bikes, falls into last place and drags over the line in a time of 2 minutes 42 seconds — a surprisingly good time, given his riding abilities.

PENN

More meaning: "It's like a poor man's Super Cycle". Winge, complain. No doubt the wide-jawed, joystick-trousered one is suffering from a lack of hairspray, for his morale seems to be dropping a little, along with his strangely coiffed hair. "The flickering bikes are putting me off", he winges, bumping his way around the track.

An uninspiring ride from such a self-proclaimed game player — high spot of the three laps is the brief moment when Penn squeaks into 36th place, but he manages to finish 39th in 2 minutes 41 seconds. A fairly close matched ride all round, with Skippy justifying his personal choice by a comfortable margin.

Sanxion

Aim: to score as many points as possible in 10 minutes



STONE

More designer complaining from the Effete One. His first game lasts a little over two minutes in which Ben claws his way to a score of 6,480. Apparently he has played this game a little, but from his performance he might as well not have bothered...

Game Two gets off to a slightly better start — 10,580 points are on the clock when the first life goes, but then the second, third and fourth lives are all lost on the walls and no extra points are gained! Wasteful playing, indeed.

After a couple of hundred seconds, Wive One has been negotiated and the score pushed up to 11,380. When he finally expires — with 3 minutes playtime available to him, Stone throws in the towel and gives up. Pusillanimous play indeed.

EDDY

The soft, wimpy Eddy likes *Sanxion*. The soft, wimpy Eddy rapidly proves he's not very good at playing *Sanxion*. Three games are played in a little over three minutes and 2,700 is the highest score reached.

Game four gets off to a slightly better start — only two crashes in the first 30 seconds — but before long D-Ed is having problems again, flying slowly, shooting slowly and bumping into things. What this Cornish Patein needs is something big and colourful and girly like *Trapdoor*. I despair of him.

Oh rarity! He has managed to squeeze onto the sec-

VALDUCCI

A manic style of play characterises El Ducci's attempts at *Sanxion* — a game he admits to having attempted on a couple of occasions. His first game lasts a mere 47 seconds and yields 1,650 points. Second time around he lasts 4 seconds longer, but still comes out with 1,650 points. Cunningly consistent if a little short and sweet! Manic stabs of the fire button combined with rather slow reactions don't help...

Slowing down a bit from the premature ejection style of missile hurling, the Stallion takes his third game a bit more steadily, survives the first level and progresses carefully until his last life is removed by a collision with a barrier at 9,000 points.

Another quick game sees him enter the second level and survive long enough to collect 7,400 points — performance he repeats once more, crashing just as the klaxon sounds and 5,960 have been collected.

Staccato stabs combined with staying power seems to be the gaming style adopted by the Italian Stallion in all but *Scooby Doo*.

PENN

Slithering into the hotseat, collecting the joystick coolly and starting play, Penn takes to *Sanxion* like an Umbertian swamp slug to a rippling pool of slime. It is a sickening sight, watching him play casually and almost competently. He has nearly made it to the end of the third stage and collected over 28,000 points before he loses the first life of the game, a mere 3 minutes 42 seconds after starting. Two minutes and another 13,000 points elapse before the second loss of life — but it only takes another 7 seconds for the Mohican Monster to die again. I note with some satisfaction.

A tricky moment follows around the 49,000 mark and Penn opts to commit suicide when confronted with the Mother Ship. One minute remains as he enters the last bonus screen and Bonus Level 5 looms nigh. "Girly" commences. Level 6 with 71,770, and six seconds before timeout he loses a life, achieving a score of 73,070.

Unable to resist an opportunity to demonstrate the sheer size of his ego, the revolting creature continues to play while all around him yawn with boredom. The arrogant fellow finally leaves the computer with a large, smug grin spread across his large, smug mouth and 124,500 on the clock...

DUNN

It's all new to him. Looking particularly frail and Rignall-like behind his specs, Skippy plonks himself down behind a Commodoreful of *Sanxion* and prepares to do his best at a game he has just seen played for the first time.

His first attempt lasts almost 30 seconds, and before the 90 second mark is up, two more games have taken place. The Blushing One's third game begins to look a little more promising as he blasts his way through to the second level. It looks like a probable personal best for the Nervous Creature as he expires on the barriers at the end of the second level with a score of 10,620 points.

And indeed, that it exactly what it proves to be — a further three short games fail to yield significant scores as the 10 minute limit ends.

RIGNALL

Rignall must sense defeat, for he begins a litany of moans covering a range of subjects to do with not liking the game, not having had the chance to practice enough, and hardly having time to pilot a *Sanxion* Fighter long enough to get used to the controls. All this, despite hours playing the game when it came in for review. Hal he will lose to Penn, that is for sure.

He starts badly, losing a life after 20 seconds. Three

Charting Sanxion

We welcomed *Sanxion* into the chart with open legs in the 1986 Christmas issue, with Stavros's game shooting to number 17. It edged into the top ten the following month, and remained there until issue 31 before slipping out altogether (oo-er) in issue 34. Rob Hubbard's masterful tune went even better, securing the number one spot on the music chart in issue 23, a position which it then held for a remarkable eight months. *Sanxion*'s tune slipped to number two in issue 32 — replaced by its follow-up, *Delta* — but hung around the music chart for another nine issues before finally disappearing in issue 42, almost two years after its review.

MUSIC TOP 10

1 (8) SANXION

Thalamus
Loading Music (Rob Hubbard)

2 (1) KNUCKLEBUSTERS

Melbourne House
Main Theme (Rob Hubbard)

3 (4) PARALLAX

Ocean
Title Screen Music (Martin Galway)

4 (-) INTERNATIONAL KARATE

System 3
Main Theme (Rob Hubbard)

5 (3) MIAMI VICE

Ocean
Title Screen Music (Martin Galway)

6 (-) GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS

Elite
Main Theme (Mark Cooksey)

7 (-) RAMBO

Ocean
Main Theme (Martin Galway)

8 (-) WARHAWK

Firebird
Main Theme (Rob Hubbard)

9 (-) THRUST

Firebird
Main Theme (Rob Hubbard)

10 (6) PHANTOMS OF THE ASTEROID

Mastertronic
Title Screen Music (Rob Hubbard)

Sanxion Sampled

But there's more! There was a treat for *Sanxion* fans on the cover of issue 26. Here was our first cover tape, full of demos, games and, most importantly, a magnificent remix of Rob Hubbard's *Sanxion* tune. Stretched for over five minutes and performed on a Yamaha CX5M synthesiser, you could now listen to this splendid theme at full blast on your stereo. Parents everywhere no doubt rejoiced.

SANXION

Hitting A Million Awards

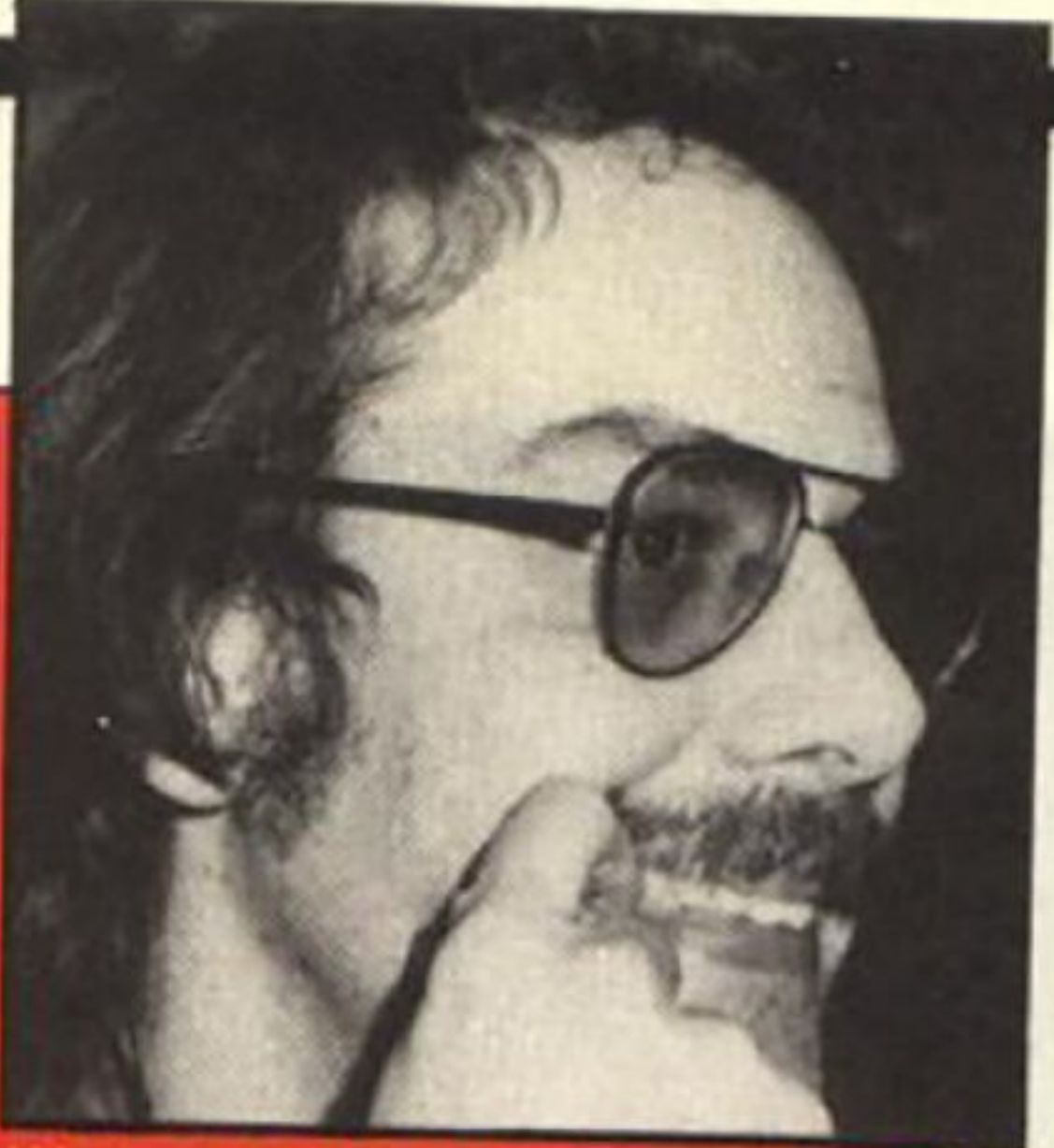
Sanxion was a regular feature in the Scorelord's High Score Heroes section of the magazine, and a particular highlight was in issue 28 when Steven Malpass of Stoke-On-Trent won one-million pounds! Wait, sorry, he got one-million points. Still, that's some serious alien butt-pounding.

SAMPLER

ROB HUBBARD'S AURAL DELIGHTS
"To all my fans, love Rob"

Thalamusic – an audio remix of the *Sanxion* loading tune. Approximately five minutes and forty-two seconds in length. Rob used authentic Fairlight samples, as heard on Jean Michel Jarre's *Zoolook*. The piece was performed on a Yamaha CX5M, linked up to an Akai S900 Sampler with a Digital Reverb and a Yamaha RX15 Drum Machine, and recorded on a four-track.

Rob recently finished writing the music for Martech's *Nemesis The Warlock*, and is currently composing for Melbourne House's *Wiz* – a piece which will push the SID chip to previously unheard of limits (again). He wants to travel the world, help the sick and elderly ("we owe them a lot"), and write for the ST ("I've always been a great fan")...



SABOTEUR (Durell)

£1,175,000 Daniel Maurice, Redland, Bristol
£971,300 Jari Jaakola, Inkeroinen, Finland
£861,700 Gareth Mitchell, Mirfield, W Yorks

SANXION (Thalamus)

1,006,466 Steven Malpass, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs
784,390 Stephen Gandy, Halesowen, W Mids
517,860 Peter Williams, Preston, Lancs

SCARABAEUS (Ariolasoft)

277,824 Robert Berry, Fleetwood, Lancs

Final Thoughts

Sleek, beautiful and addictive, *Sanxion* is one of the Commodore 64's top-tier shoot-'em-ups. While the game may have been outshone by the legacy of its superb music from Rob Hubbard, it remains a fantastic, if derivative, slice of shooting action. Sanx Stavros!



Rocky & Co

Price: \$5 | digital • £15+ | physical

Developer: Icon64 / Psytronik (2023)

Link: on.mom/tije



Adriaaaannn! Sorry, wrong franchise. What sounds like a spin-off sitcom from film's greatest boxing series is in actual fact a loving homage to the old Datasoft title *The Goonies*, and a pseudo-sequel to *The Legend of Atlantis*, reviewed favourably in these pages several years back.

Rocky Memphis, international man of mystery, has discovered the temple of lost King Ku, home of the fabled Golden... well we won't get into all that again. Setting off with pals Spud and Jet, he finds famed French archaeologist Russo Baluch hot on their heels. Can they make their way through the temple to the treasure before he does?

Each of your team brings a unique skill to the party: Rocky has his whip, Spud can trigger heavy switches, and Jet can run and jump further. Before you, lie twelve screens of traps and tricks,

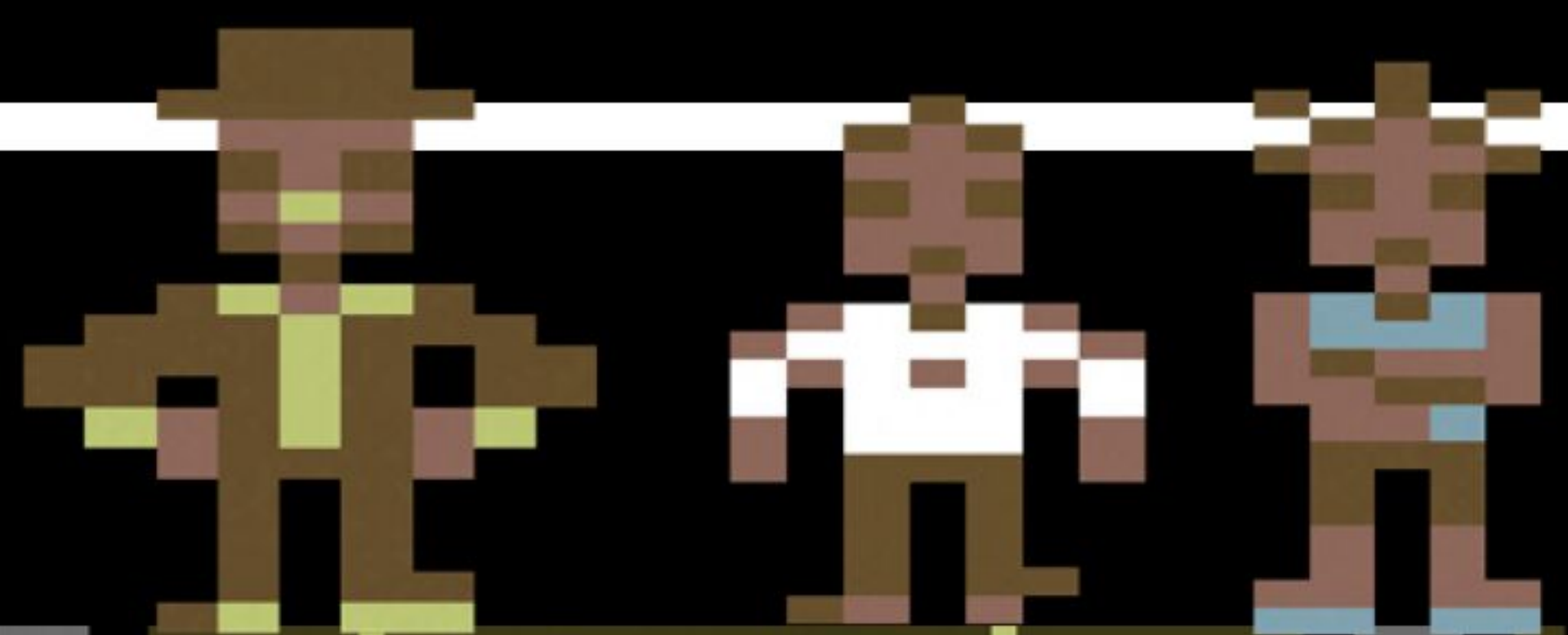
I groaned internally when the blurb said twelve screens, as I thought it wouldn't take long to conquer. How wrong I was. Not only is the practice mode a real magnet to keep you playing, negating some of the frustration dying repeatedly to various obstacles, each screen has an internal tracker of sorts, so you don't always start from the beginning again. There will be some swearing, guaranteed, when you screw up, yes, I'm looking at you screens five and ten, offset by the internal fist-pumping upon solving each quite ingeniously designed room. It's not perfect, there are a couple of niggles, the ability to fall off ladders if you're not quite on a platform being one. However, even with the sparring gloves eventually off the game still packs a punch, and you will want to continue, or keep coming back if you need time to think, until you reach the end.



the object being to open the exit and escape to the next room. How do you achieve that? Well, that's for you to work out by harnessing the unique attributes of each team member in perfect unison. Or die trying.

Rocky & Co not only supports one and two button

controllers, it also provides a practice mode for you to work out all those fiendish puzzles in the comfort of infinite lives before tackling the game for realies. Only you don't get to see the end sequence, or the bonus screen earned from finding the letters of the word ICON...





Wowers in my trousers! The collector's edition cartridge package I snagged comes with a glossy manual and nifty trinkets that scream quality. This is truly incredible for a 41 year-old computing platform. Kenz from Psytronik has really pulled out all the stops here, but it's not just his package that's ace. The game itself is more than just another brain-tickler; the "problem" with most platformers is on each screen you do the same ol' routine just in a different shape, leading to reviewers sometimes thinking, "oh great, *another* platformer!". But here, with a trio of characters each sporting their own quirks and quibbles, the game keeps you hooked and on your toes with puzzle-action that's as refreshing as a cool drink on a hot summer's day in Blackpool. And the catchy music had me whistling the tune on the way to loo breaks. I did experience some frustration with the one-button joystick controls (trying to crack the whip can switch characters) but my own quibbles aside, *Rocky* is as solid as a a... well, rock. Rock(y) on!





PRESENTATION: 94%

What we've come to expect from ICON64/Psytronik, with practice mode, choice of music and/or SFX during play, plus industry leading physical editions.

GRAPHICS: 85%

Characterful small sprites leap and Rocky foot-tap their way through well-designed backdrops.

SOUND: 87%

Title and loading tracks, and a new piece for every screen.

HOOKABILITY: 90%

The desire to unpick and solve each new challenging screen is strong, although you will die. A lot. Bye.

LASTABILITY: 89%

Once each room has been solved, you'll want to find the bonus screen.

OVERALL 90%

A worthy successor to *Legend of Atlantis*. The Rocky Road of ice creams.

"HEY THAT'S ME!"



A aaarrgh! In fact, let me say that again in case you missed the point... AAAARRRGH! Alright, I confess, I was too impatient to get along with *The Goonies*... there were so many arcade-style games for me to play back in 1985 that it never got a look-in. *Rocky & Co* follows that template which means that it is, at heart, a puzzle game. Here we go again! It took me a long, long time and a number of chats with Mat to get to grips with this, but finally, fiiiiinally I got there. It is a clever game, and you do feel satisfaction when you solve a screen, but boy, is it hard work getting there. I certainly recommend *Rocky & Co*; all things considered, it's one of Icon's best games to date. Just be aware that you may need a large supply of patience if you share my taste.



Those games that got lost in the trenches of time, now dug out and released to the fans of Commodore 64 gaming today!

This issue, *Body Slam* by Firebird from 1988. So quite recently then.



BODY SLAM



Step into the ring alongside some not so gorgeous ladies of wrestling with Software Creations' conversion of Sega's *Body Slam!* Form a tag team from The Evil Alliance or Fresh Gals in an attempt to win the title. The Evil Alliance are, shall we say, on the large side [*can you say that these days? – Ed*], and liable to overpower their opponents. Fresh Gals

are more nimble and athletic and can run their opponents ragged. A combination of joystick and button will see your wrestler run, kick, punch [*it's still all in the mind – Ed*], and throw in their attempts to win. Will Liz Aard overcome Polly Filla? Will Joss Tick be destroyed by Freda Kreuger? Their fates, and the championship, are in your hands!



I loved *Rock 'n Wrestle*, so the prospect of an all-women brawler was intriguing. It gets off to a good start, with the, shall we say, "dubiously stereotypical" names from the arcade version changed to be more broadly humorous – a lesson taken from *Frank Bruno's Boxing*, along with its character

set. Once you start playing though, you can tell that it's a bit of a screw-job. It's hard to pull off moves consistently, and (ironically) there's no weight to the characters or their actions. It's a shame; if the controls were more precise, this could have been good fun.



I hadn't heard of *Body Slam* until acquiring the master disk off eBay, and with a development name such as Software Creations, you'd expect a quality... creation. Except sadly that's far from what you get, although I'm not being quite as harsh as

Paul. The characters act as if they are skating around the ring at times, there's a lack of weight or reaction to your moves so you don't know if they've landed unless you look at the opponent's energy bar, and actually trying to perform something is inconsistent. A pity as there's some decent graphics and jolly Tim Follin tunes, but not much of a playable game.

PRESENTATION: 57%

Basic but clean screen layout, one or two-player modes, and choice of team members and names.

GRAPHICS: 68%

Wrestlers are colourful and reasonably well-animated, but not much else bar profile pics.

SOUND: 80%

Some upbeat Follin tracks accompany the slaughter.

HOOKABILITY: 52%

The CPU doesn't give much quarter, so practise those moves in two-player, you oughta.

LASTABILITY: 35%

Oof. Although two-player mode may be where most of the fun lies. Maybe.

OVERALL 43%

Championshit Wrestling.



WinGames



Price: \$ free | digital

Developer: WebFritzi (2023)

Link: on.mom/LAnR



Blast into the tech-tastic realm of *Windows 95* with *WinGames*. Who needs those old-school arcades when you're a PC whiz who owns a completely legal and not falsely-activated-at-all copy of *Windows*?

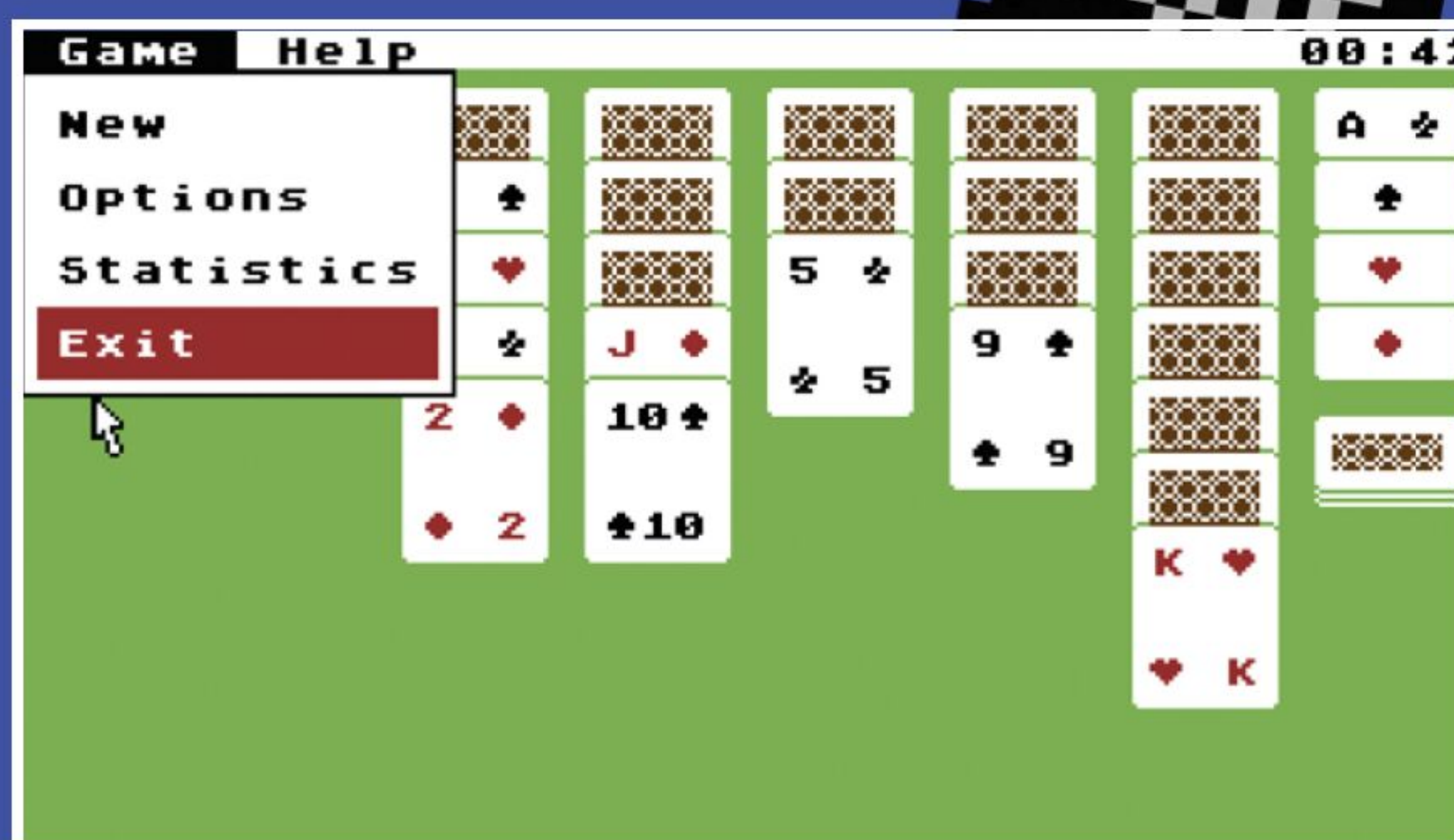
You've got the digital gold right there on your shiny CD-ROM: *Solitaire*, *Freecell*, and *Minesweeper*, all a left-click away on that iconic Start button. And now, on the even more iconic Commodore 64 which curiously was discontinued in '94. Hmm.

Anyway, conspiracies aside, first you shuffle into *Solitaire*, the classic *Klondike* card caper. Your mission: stack cards in a descending, colour-alternating conga line - think King of Clubs boogieing down to Queen of Hearts. The endgame? Clearing the deck ace-high style.

Next up, *Freecell*; *Solitaire*'s brainier cousin. All the cards are on the table from the get-go. Sort 'em like *Solitaire*, but here's

the kicker - you've got four free cells [oh I get it now - only took me 28 years! - Ed] to park your cards. Patience and strategy are your best pals here.

And then, the minesweeping master-class: *Minesweeper*. It's a click-and-dodge dance through a minefield, using clever clues to sidestep the boom-booms. Simple? Sure. Easy? Don't be such a card.



So rev up your Commodore 64 based copy of *Windfauxs 95* and dive into the pixelated pastime of *WinGames*. May you win many games.



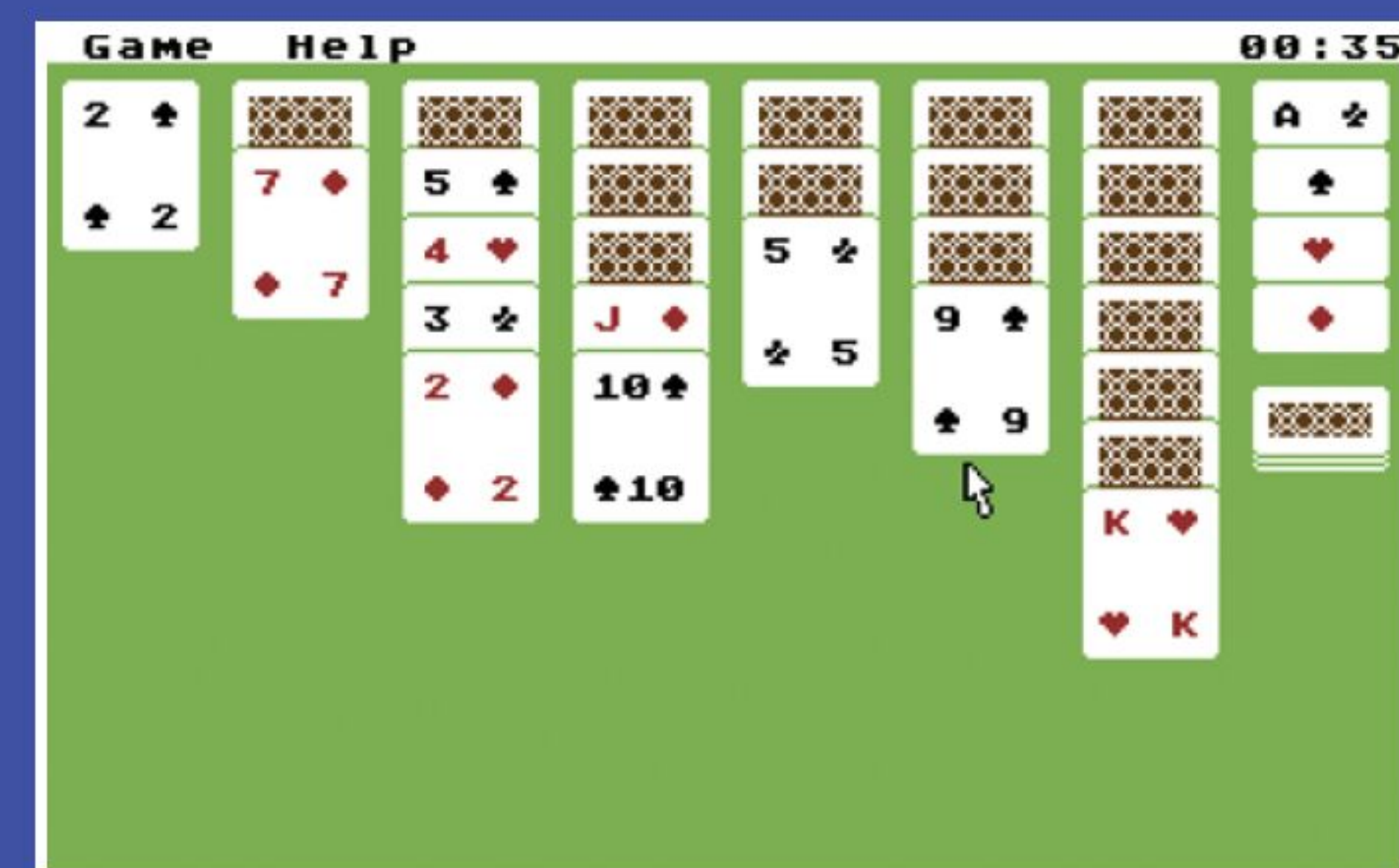
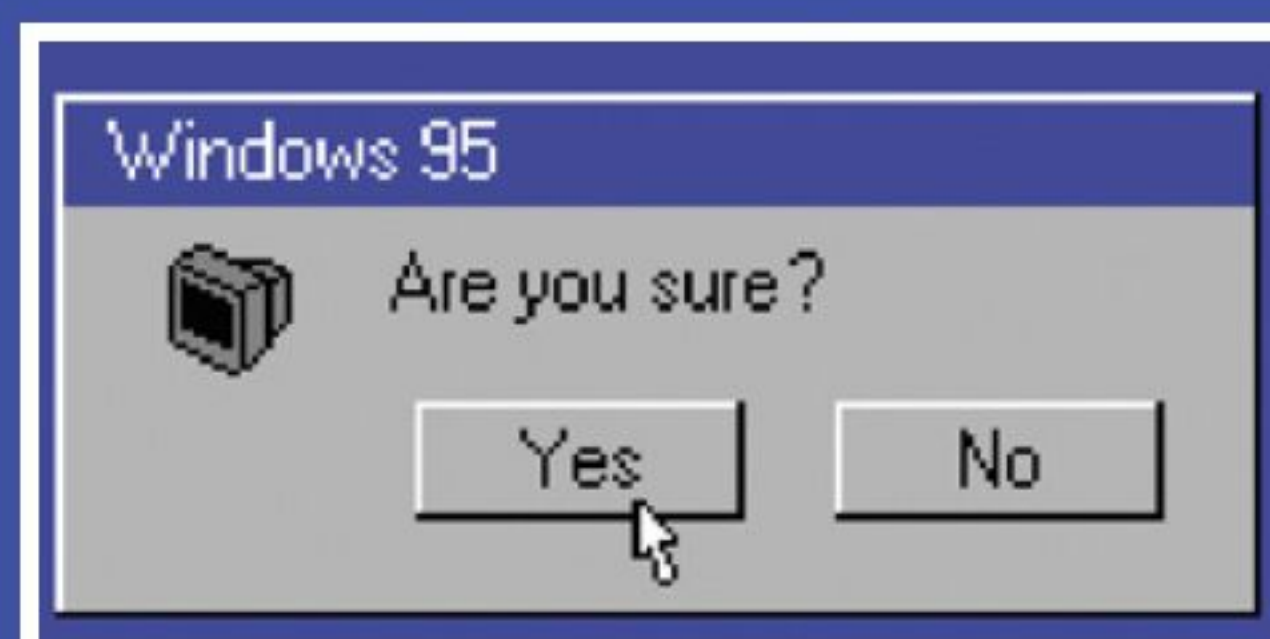
I first encountered these time-sinks way, way back in the days of *Windows 3.1*, when *Win 95* was probably a twinkle in Steve Balmer's eye. The implementation of the UI certainly evokes some heavy memories, albeit I evidently played *Freecell* a lot more than my two compatriots did. Always felt it was fairer than *Solitaire*. *Minesweeper* is pretty funky too, but sadly the mega size grid is missing, along with pretty much any sound. Mouse control support scores bonus points however. More polish would have resulted in a higher score, along with the inclusion of my favourite card game *Hearts*. Just remember kids, Bill Gates may have said that 64 KB of memory ought to be enough for anyone!



"I AM WRITING TO
COMPLAIN THAT
BILL GATES IS NOT
ACTUALLY A GATE"



TEST



There is
a lot of
nostalgia
in
clicking
on the

Start button to reveal the three games in this compilation. And each of the games is well-made and easy to get into, with the mouse control being the best option. *Solitaire* is great to pick up and play, *Freecell* is one I played less frequently in its *Windows* incarnations, and *Minesweeper* is always addictive. However, I was disappointed there were only two sizes of grids to defuse, and only *Solitaire* has card back/colour options. The lack of sound is noticeable, and at times things become sluggish. For all that nostalgia, there is a sense that more could have been done with this.



To be
honest, I'd
have been
perfectly
happy
if this

only included *Solitaire*. The hours I've spent, aimlessly clicking away at cards, trying to clear all four suits, is... well, far more than is healthy. I've never really been that much of a fan of *Freecell* or *Minesweeper*, but that's kind of irrelevant here. The accuracy of the front end when loading this up makes me grin every time; it really does take me back to the days when I got my first PC. The games themselves are simple, of course, but this package is not about brilliant gameplay. It's an homage to an older time, in a newer time, on a machine from an even older time.

PRESENTATION: 74%

Menus are easy to navigate around in a *Windows 95* style, and the statistics are fun to read, but the games lack frills.

GRAPHICS: 41%

Beyond the subtle technical tricks of the front end, a straightforward look and feel. Like *Windows* then.

SOUND: 4%

Simple card clicks and completely silent mines.

HOOKABILITY: 77%

Familiar games are easy enough to pick up.

LASTABILITY: 70%

There is replay value but ultimately it's just a nostalgia trip.

OVERALL 71%

A "window" to the past, with a fun package of classic distractions.



"WHEN ONE WINDOW CLOSES,
ANOTHER COMMODORE OPENS"

2:53 PM

A Pig Quest

Developer Diary

We sizzled up the 'developer diary' idea back in ZZAP! 64 issue 3, and it was such a ham-tastic hit that we decided to grill it up again some 40 years later. We also trotted in at first place when it came to previewing

would-be GOLD MEDAL winner A Pig Quest in our Ed's juicy interview with its creator some fourteen issues ago, and now we're going whole hog with part 2 of our developer diary from the bacon-loving Antonio Savona

"SHOULD'VE BEEN A SIZZLER"



When Alain reached out with the game idea and a few test screens, I immediately understood he was onto something really special. I had never seen anything like that on a C64 and I thought it would have been foolish [foul-ish – Ed] of me to pass on the opportunity to be the one to implement his vision. Unfortunately, that also meant I was putting myself into the most complex game-coding experience of my life. By far.

Starting from this entry, we'll take a look at some of the coding feats that Alain put me through and the solutions that I implemented. I am not sure that any of



A fire-spitting skeleton, an evil octopus, and a peaceful waterfall – some of the many large bitmap objects that the game has to animate

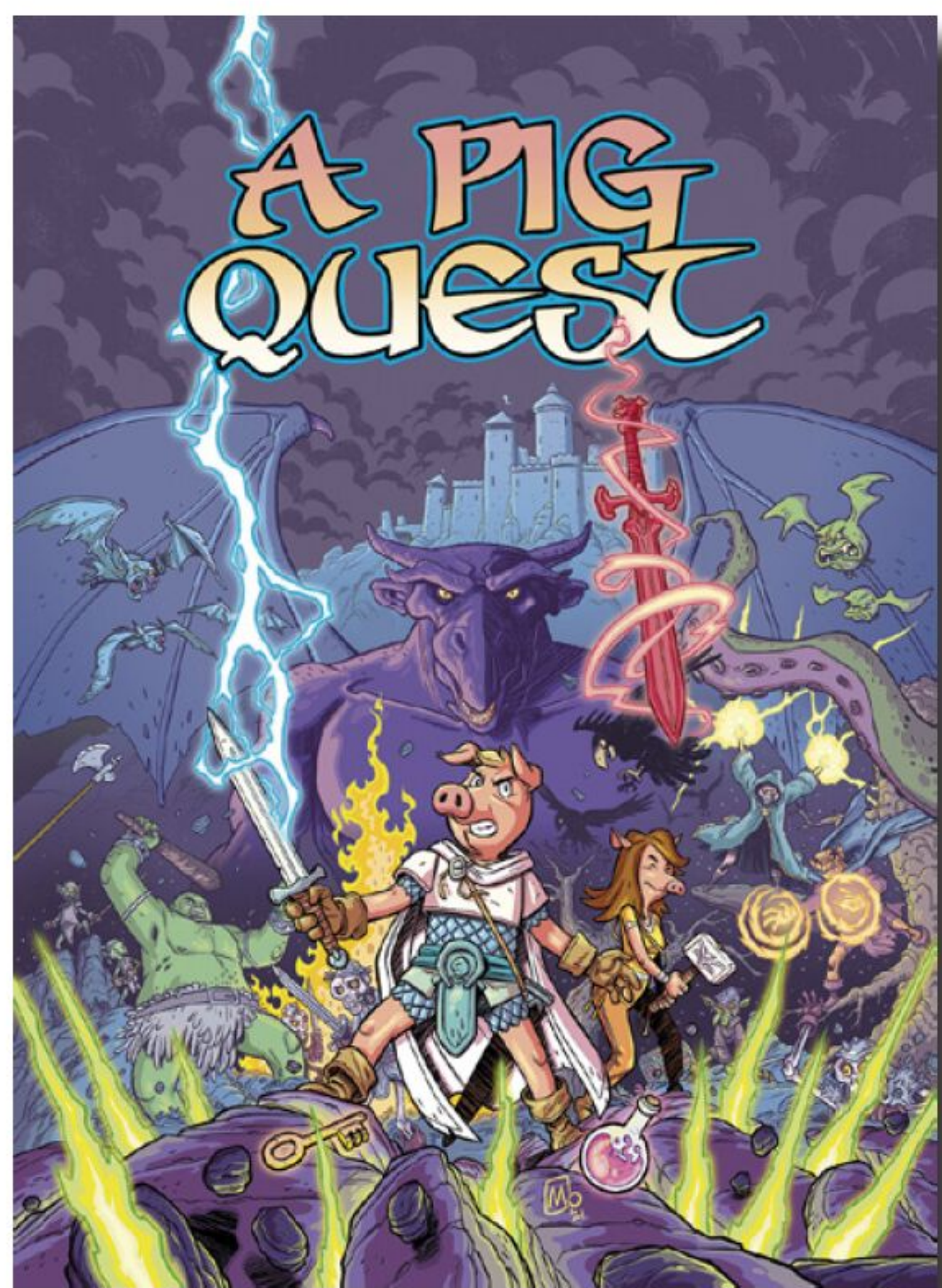
these techniques could be defined as "novel", let alone "state of the art", but putting everything together the way I did was definitely novel to me.

The first of the head scratching programming puzzles that have been making my evenings interesting as of late is that of animating large objects on screen.

Fast Bitmap Animations

A Pig Quest is designed to leverage C64's multicolour bitmap mode. This graphics mode allows the artist to draw with fewer limitations compared to the more frequently used char mode, but it comes at a cost: with their 10K footprint, screens

require roughly five times the memory of a typical char screen. Commodore 320 anyone? This, in turn, makes it exceedingly difficult to animate game elements other than sprites. Say we want to display a letter on screen at a specific position. In char mode that would be a single write, while with bitmaps eight write operations are required just to plot the shape, and then we need two more writes to set the appropriate colour attributes. Scaling this process to larger shapes and taking into account





all the needed animation frame decoding logic means that usually you can't afford to move large bitmap objects along with the rest of the game without risking a slowdown. One such example is the game *Cybernoid*, which is also

designed in bitmap mode. Those who have played this gem a lot (like me) know that when the screen gets busy slowdowns are to be expected.

In Alain's original vision, *A Pig Quest* had plenty

of animated bitmap objects, and some of them are quite large. When I started working on the animations, I first went "the *Cybernoid* way", which is not hugely different from the way things are done on modern devices. With this approach, the animation cycle of an object on screen is defined by a series of rectangular pictures - think frames in a film - which are simply plotted on screen. Interestingly, this brute force pixel-plotting technique is what Spectrum coders are stuck with, regardless of the game type, not having hardware sprites at their disposal. The Speccy passes this test with flying colours [or sometimes clashing colours - Ed], thanks to its greater cycle count and lower pixel count than the breadbin, while I started to experience the same *Cybernoid* slowdowns. Point for the rubber-keyed wonder, I suppose. You win some, you lose some.

Next time - how delta-encoding and other tricks allowed the venerable Commodore to not only equalise but take the lead against Sir Clive's machine!

ZZAP! 64 RADAR • 12 MONTHS OUT!

Release dates subject to change (estimations sourced from the developers where possible!)

Yeti Mountain



There have been multiple cases of people going missing at the Yeti Mountain Lodge with the latest being your best friend. Investigate and find out what really happened to him.

Toki Remastered



"WHICH WAY IS UP?"

A total makeover of the original Toki conversion for C64 released by Ocean in 1991, with entirely new graphics and sound faithfully converted from the coin-op.

Briley Witch Chronicles 2



Based on books 5 and 6 of the Briley Witch novels, The Fallen Witch and Grey Waters. The sequel follows the adventures of Briley and Smokey, her grumpy cat.

Ninja Gaiden

Wolfling Reloaded

Gravity Duck 64

Rockford

Chill3r

The Island Adventure

Chef Quest+

Stoker

Magnificent Drunken Tiger

GøbLiN

TONY

infeZtation

Hibernated 2

Igor

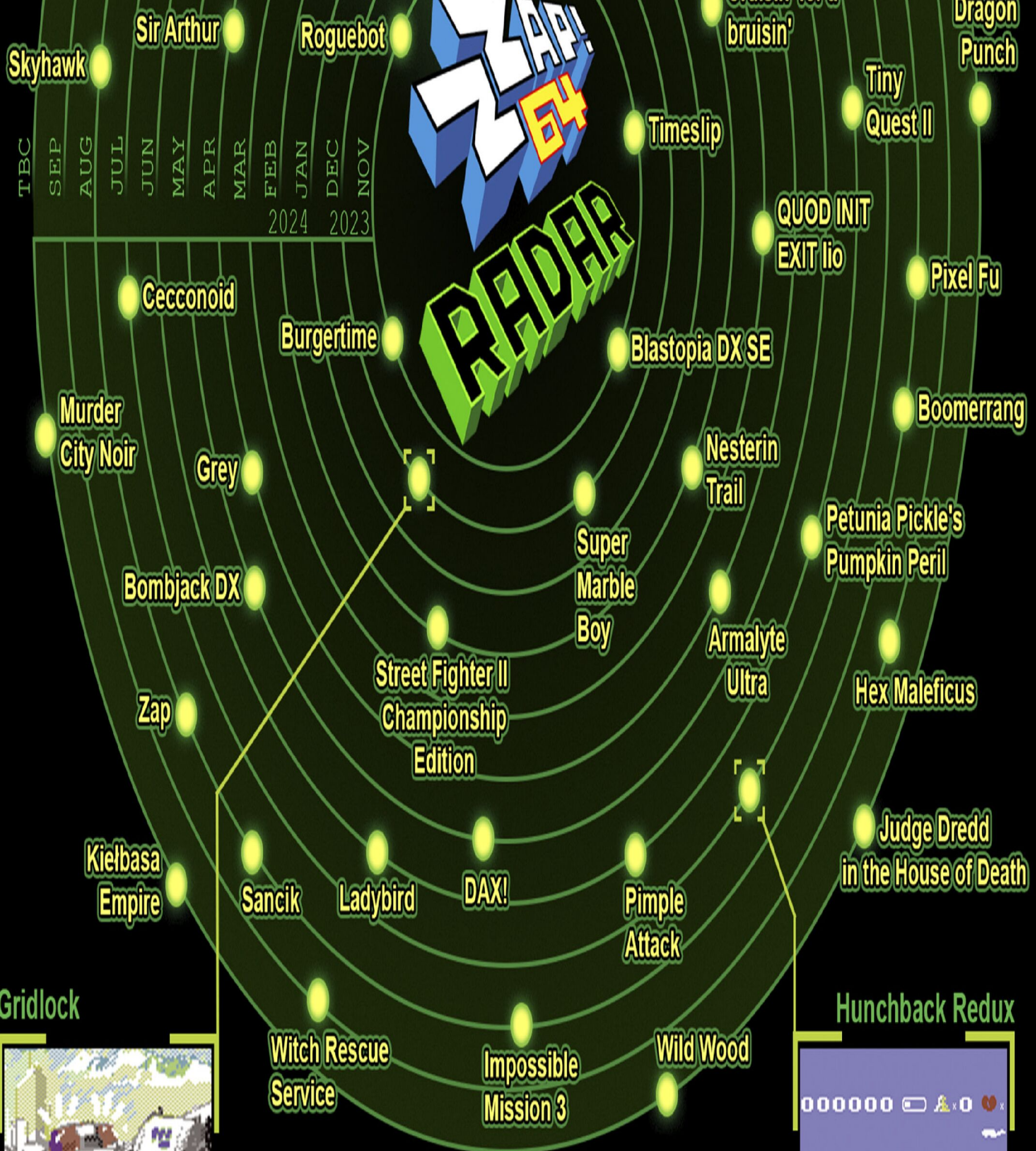
Harharagon

Tiki

Sabre Wulf Remastered

Captain Ishtar 2

Cruisin' for a



Emergency calls are coming in thick and fast. Can you negotiate the gridlocked hospital car park and free your ambulance in time to save those poor people?

Guide Quasimodo through multiple levels avoiding knights, arrows, cannonballs, spears and other hazards in order to reach Esmeralda who has been captured and is now being held captive by an evil king in a castle in rural France.

TECHNICAL BIT IN THE MIDDLE

In the shadowy confines of ZZAP! Towers, a new quest has been bestowed upon the proficient Professor as he turns his power-ful eye (that’s the left one) to the pulsing heart of our beloved C64s—the power supply. Heavy! (No, they are.) We hope you find this article as electrifying as a Gigawatt on a Clock Tower.

ORIGINAL COMMODORE PSU

COMMODORE BUSINESS MACHINES

Commodore’s own PSU comes with a legacy of power but a side of peril. Once heralded (sorta) for bringing life to our C64s, it now stands as a relic fraught with the danger of power overloads and heat-induced failures, as Bill Herd was first Herd to say back in 2012.

- + Original, authentic, the real deal.
- Overheating issues, potential fire hazard, may start World War III, could bring a literal meltdown to your C64 experience.



Can Buy It?	Used, if you dare.
Can Build It?	Not recommended.
Compatibility:	Obviously.
Cost:	Might be included for free, but at what cost?

KEELOG AIRDRIVE STANDARD & DIGITAL PSUs

AMZN.TO/47VCN3J

PRICE: £56

The Digital Grey premium PSU is a modern marvel, encased in sleek plastic and flaunting an OLED display. It’s a high-end investment to power your C64, certified for safety and performance. They also have cheaper or beefier options available on the web, but this one gets our vote.

- + High-quality construction, warranty-backed, gives a clear readout of its operation.
- The cost may be steep, but can you really put a price on reliability?



Can Buy It?	Certainly
Can Build It?	Leave it to the professionals.
Compatibility:	Built for the C64.
Cost:	A premium for peace of mind.

“DON’T GET TECHNICAL WITH ME!”



By Professor Brian Strain

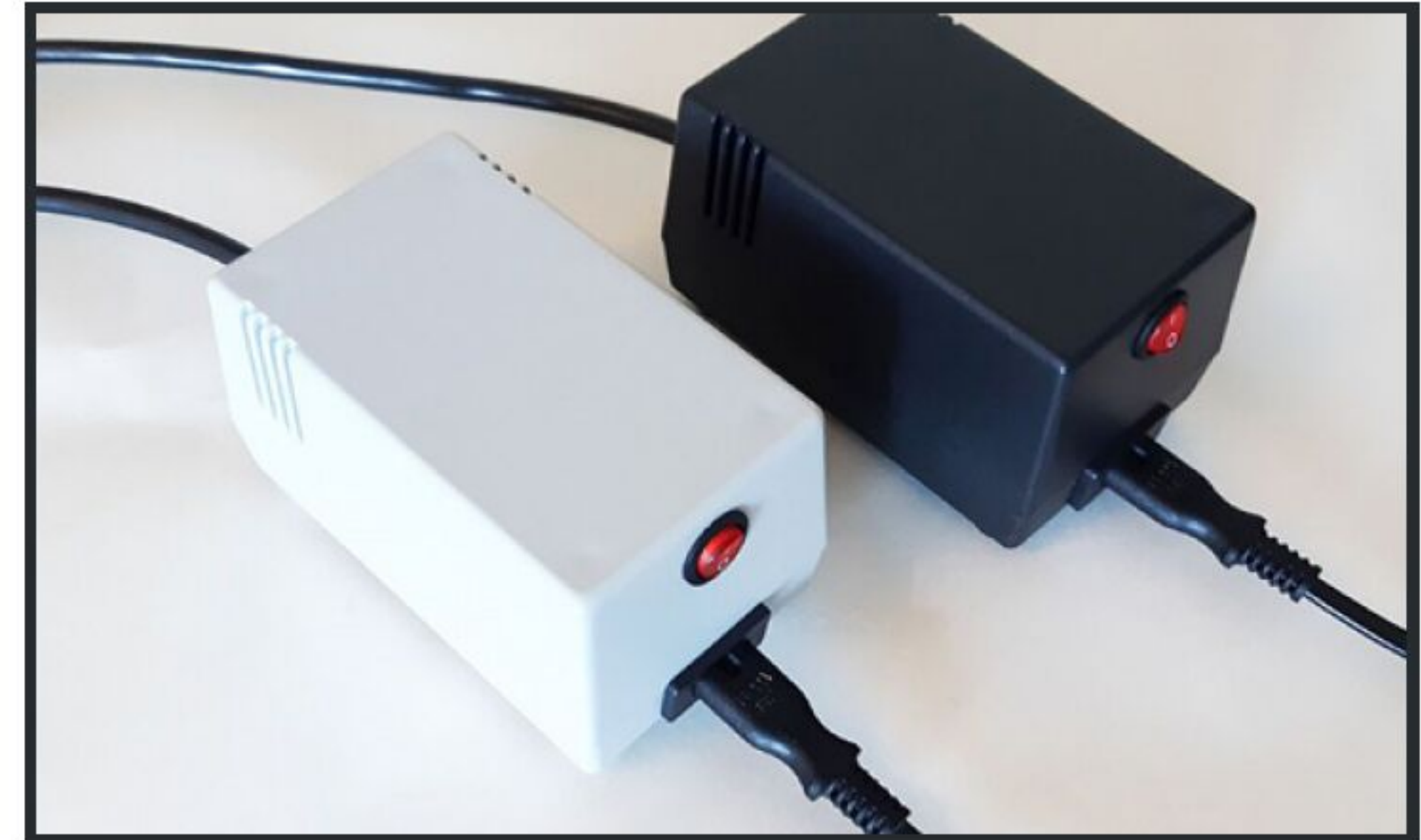
ELECTROWARE PSU

C64PSU.COM

PRICE: £34

This tasty brick is fully isolated and features over-voltage protection, solid build, long cables, and a power switch. It also conserves energy by not drawing power when turned off.

- + Stabilised outputs, over-voltage protection, solid build, options for international plugs, budget friendly.
- Shipping from Poland may add to cost, obviously.



Can Buy It?	Yes, from Poland.
Can Build It?	They can, you can't, sorry.
Compatibility:	Tailored for C64.
Cost:	Super Happy Budget Hour

RAY CARLSEN PSUs

PORTCOMMODORE.COM/RCARLSEN

PRICE: \$35–\$85

As a former official Commodore repair technician, Ray Carlsen's work is second-to-none. He offers a few options ranging from a dual "wall wart" solution that occupies two electrical sockets to provide the required 5V DC and 9V AC lines, to a fully enclosed PSU, or even ones that can power 1541 drives to boot, literally. Or, opt for his flavour of C64 Saver; a clever device that plugs in between the original problematic PSU and your C64, acting as a digital guardian angel ready to sever the electrical lifeline at the first hint of danger. Electrifying!

- + The best of the best with no fear of over-voltage or compatibility issues.
- Not the sleekest looking designs, website looks to be from 1982, might be downsizing his work of late, based in the USofA wherever that is.



Can Buy It?	For now.
Can Build It?	Let the man work!
Compatibility:	The best available.
Cost:	Affordable.

TECHNICAL BIT IN THE MIDDLE

ATOM PSU

COMMODORE-4EVER.COM

PRICE: \$59

This PSU has over-voltage protection and a power switch. It supplies up to 4 amps on the DC line; more than some. Oh and it fits in the palm of your hand, like the later model CBM ones.

- + Super compact design, over voltage and short circuit protection, adapters for C128 or Plus/4 are nice options too.
- Adapters for 128 or Plus/4 sold separately, design a little clunky and boxy, if cute.



Can Buy It?	Yeshhh.
Can Build It?	Nah mate.
Compatibility:	Works with C64 and C128.
Cost:	Middling.

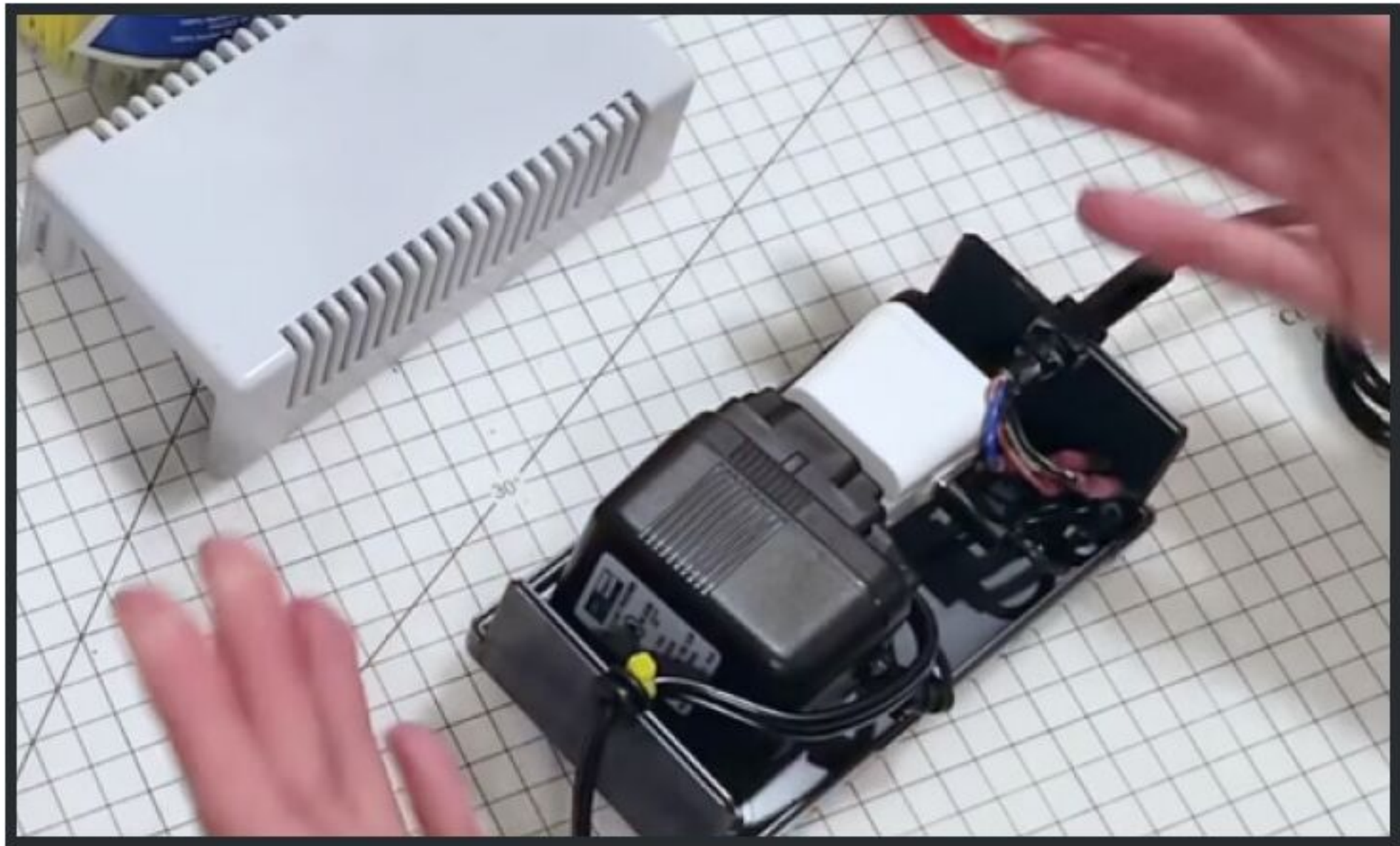
RETRO RECIPES CHEAP & SEXY PSU

YOUTU.BE/UCDXVOX6WEY

PRICE: VARIES

In one of his first videos someone called Purplefractal plugged a 9V and 5V off-the-shelf wall charger into a 2-into-1 mains extension cable, placed the bundle in a sleek vented case, and ended up with a C64 power supply that five years later hasn't blown up [yet... – Ed] and is still his main Commodore 64 PSU.

- + A fun and satisfying option for home tinklers erm I mean tinkerers, can be cheap or free if you already have some of the bits.
- Not for the faint hearted, UK readers may need a bigger case due to the larger UK plugs than the US ones used (but ours don't fall out of the walls so there).



Can Buy It?	In bits, yes.
Can Build It?	That's the point.
Compatibility:	So far 100%.
Cost:	Depends what parts you already have lying around.

CLOSE 15 With these options laid bare, the power lies in your hands. Will you stick with the devil you know, shield your system with Carlsen's savvy saver, invest in a pristine power supply, or build your own at your own risk? The power to choose lies in your hands, so for now I retreat to the dungeons, where the smell of burning ZX Spectrum power supplies and smoking rubber looms ominously for some reason.

demoscene legends

OUR inaugural Demoscene Legends segment kicks off with a spotlight on CREST, a demo group hailing from Germany, founded in July 1988 by the creative minds of Crossbow and Goldrush. CREST consistently astounded us with their remarkable demos over the years, solidifying their reputation as VIC masters and demoscene Gods.



CROSSBOW - DEEKAY - GOLDRUSH - CHAKE



Notable examples of their prowess include “**Ice Cream Castle**,” an astonishing oldschool tech demo, “**2 Years Crest**,” where Crossbow unleashed a plethora of FLI effects and even hid a surprise part (simply hold down ‘goldrush’ during the decrunch message of the mega DYCP section). Yes, hidden parts, or Easter eggs, were becoming a trend. “**Crest Light**” showcased unlimited bobs, and “**Crest Avantgarde**” marked the point at which Crossbow achieved God-like status in the demoscene.



Further examples were “**Krestology**,” a deliberately paced “trackmo” introducing various new graphic modes, the first IFLI full-screen stretcher, multiplexers over IFLI, and the inaugural IFLI line-cruncher. It originally came with an additional tool disk that included an installer for 40 tracks – yes, a 40-track demo! I still recall the delight of receiving those disks in the mail, adorned with vibrant colour labels. Also noteworthy was “**Deus Ex Machina**,” a standout winner at the Mekka & Symposium demo party (which was in coop with fellow demo group, Oxyron), and “**BluREU**,” which required a “16MB”



RAM Expansion Unit. Not to be overlooked, “**Krestage 3**” featured an impressive 9 sprites on a single line!! And, let’s not forget another collaboration with Oxyron, resulting in the release of “**Risen from Oblivion**,” for the Commodore 128. This demo had two sides, with Crossbow responsible

for the VIC side, featuring the first ever graphics in 2MHz mode. The other side catered to the C128’s VDC graphics chip, coded by Graham. Finally, someone unlocked the potential of the “VDC”. It’s truly astonishing that the VDC’s 80-column mode hasn’t been exploited more extensively (even today, right guys!). **CREST** is still about and may surprise us again someday!





Price: \$ donation | digital

Developer: Fleischgemuese (2023)

Link: on.mom/QtAP



Alice fell down her rabbit hole, but at least the hole only had gravity acting in one direction *[good band – Ed]*. This place is... different. Thankfully, you have your laser targeter to help, but that's it barring your wits and limited jumping ability. Might need to flip the situation on its head and fall upwards instead. Wheeee...

FiZZ sees you control an unnamed hero battling HiZZ way through forty levels in a quest to escape. Or at least ensure he survives another day, poor chap. Platforms float in the middle of space, and if you're not careful you could find yourself falling forever in one direction *[good band – Ed]*. The level's centre mass can be altered by triggering the gravity pods dotted around, but mind the laser hazards, portals, and heavy blocks. Switches can be flipped to alter the level or open the exit in some cases, and your laser can be bounced around by mirrors, or be used to swap places with specific target blocks. This isn't going to be easy.



There is also a co-op mode available with thirty levels, all different to single mode, but if you happen to

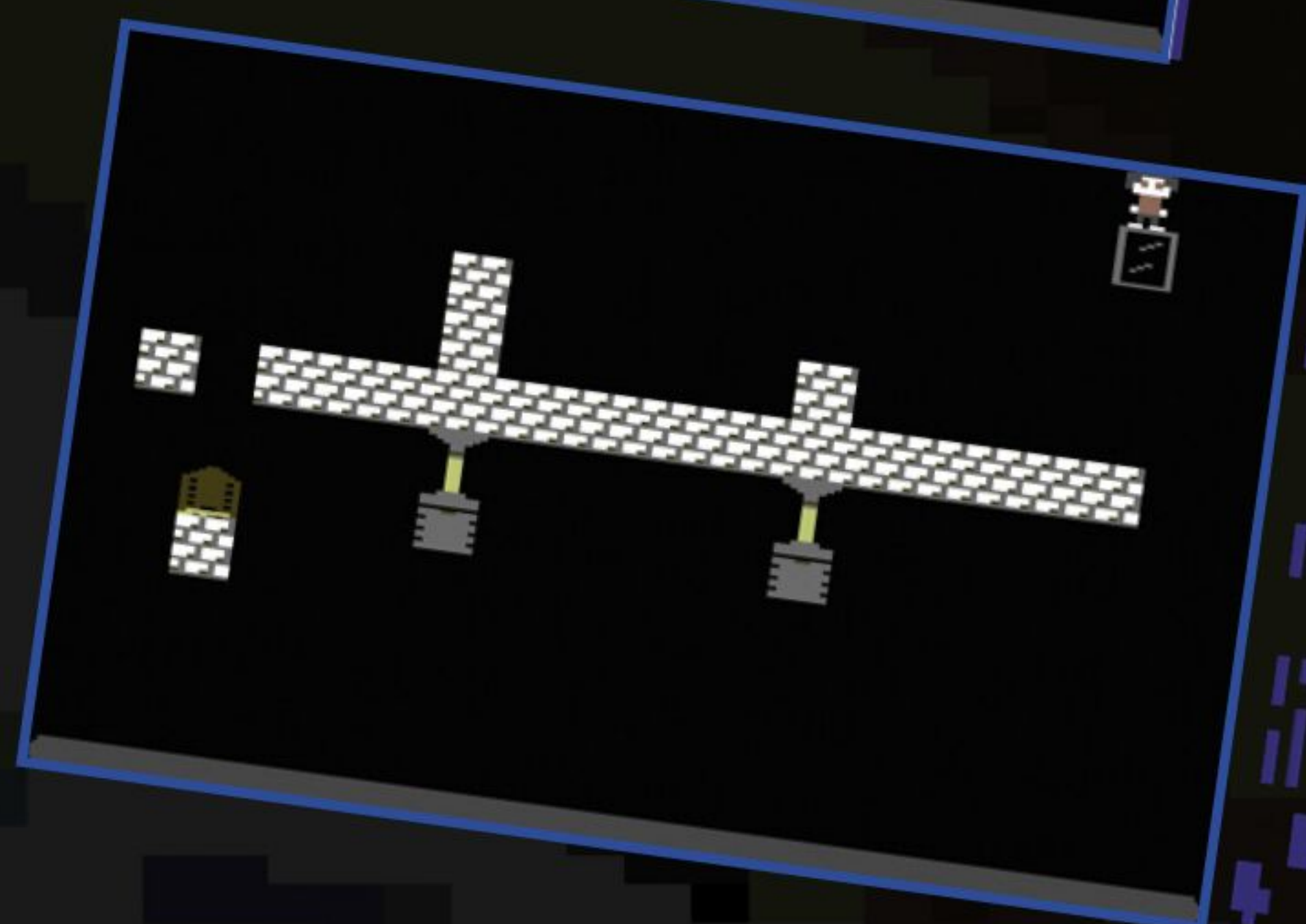
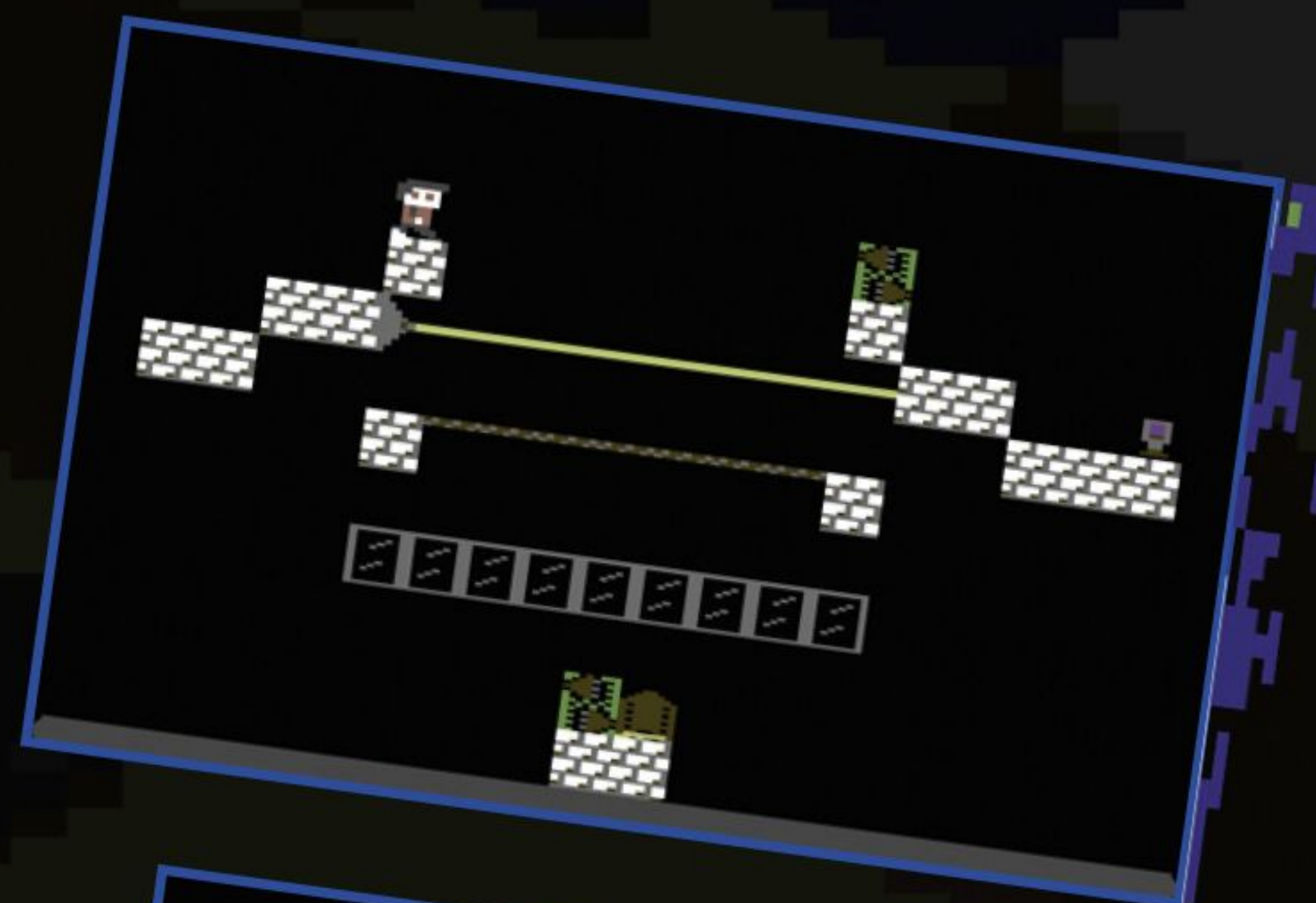
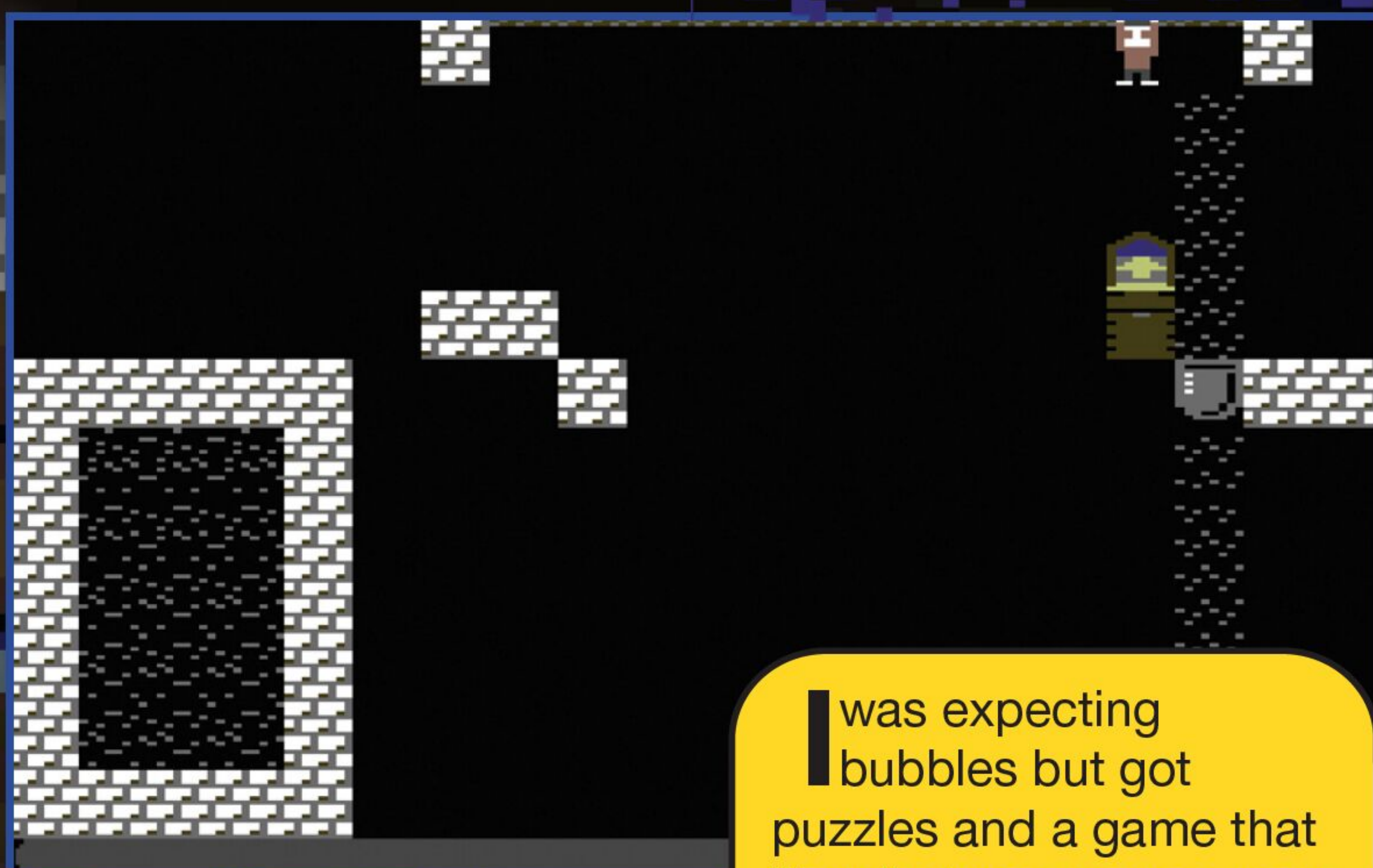
be Billy No Mates, you can attempt them by yourself by using the space bar to swap between characters. Spacey!

There's more than a faint whiff of *Portal* in the level construction, mechanics, and gravity-warping elements of *FiZZ* that immediately endeared me to it in the same fashion. There are even actual portals later on. How are you holding up? Because I'm a potato! *[Stop being so hard on yourself! – Ed]* Well, your brain may get a bit mashed as the initial stages ease you in before thoroughly tying it via four-way gravity knots. Between single and co-op levels, there's a lot of addictive puzzling to solve, made all the better by following the trend of having every stage unlocked from the start. And if you screw up – and you will a considerable number of times – restarting is but a Delete button press away. I don't know how the name of the game came about (no, not Abba!) but it's a sure-fire fizzing experience.





TEST



What are they doing to our brains lately? All these puzzle games will have Paul's dribbling out of his ears. Still, this was nearly a triumph in a *Portal* style. The first couple of levels ease you in, and then you have to start hitting switches and dodging stuff flying around. It's not a looker, but then a good puzzle game gets by on the challenge more than vanity. The longevity is here too, with plenty of levels to beat, a construction kit (that can be a little unwieldy to use), and the ability to rope in a friend for the two-player mode. A sparkling wine rather than a fine champagne; if you don't like defying gravity then the fizz may be a bit flat...



I was expecting bubbles but got puzzles and a game that literally turns you on your head. It takes a moment or two to get the hang of moving objects around but once you understand the rules, then the brain ache begins. It's enough of a task to have to think horizontally and vertically but you will often end up standing on your side trying to block a laser while shifting a block who knows where. And that's before your buddy, teleporters, and deflectors make an appearance – then the puzzle trouble really ramps up. You WILL be restarting levels a lot as you progress. Your characters do look cute, but otherwise it keeps the visuals very simple, but then this is a puzzle game after all. It's always nice to have a different take on a game and FiZZ is a refreshing variation on the genre.



PRESENTATION: 75%

Clever two-player mode, in-game hints, level designer, and simple but clear presentation.

GRAPHICS: 57%

Basic but interesting use of backgrounds and sprites to create a different look.

SOUND: 70%

The title tune works, but the sound FX needed more sparkle.

HOOKABILITY: 81%

Puzzle fiends will lap up the first few levels as new ideas are introduced.

LASTABILITY: 83%

Getting to grips with 70 levels and building your own ones will give you hours of sparkling enjoyment.

OVERALL 81%

Vintage puzzle action. When life hands you lemons, make fizzy lemonade.

"I'M FAILING TO SEE THE UPSIDE"





GRIDLOCK

Price: \$ TBC

Developer: Mega Style (2023)

Link: on.mom/fvll



There are few jobs as stressful as that of an ambulance driver, with time and speed being critical, so the last thing they need is for selfish drivers to block them into the car park! Unfortunately, you happen to be living in the most selfish city in the world, and every day when you get to work, you find that other drivers have hemmed the ambulance in! It's your job to shift the vexing vehicles so you and the other paramedics can get out there



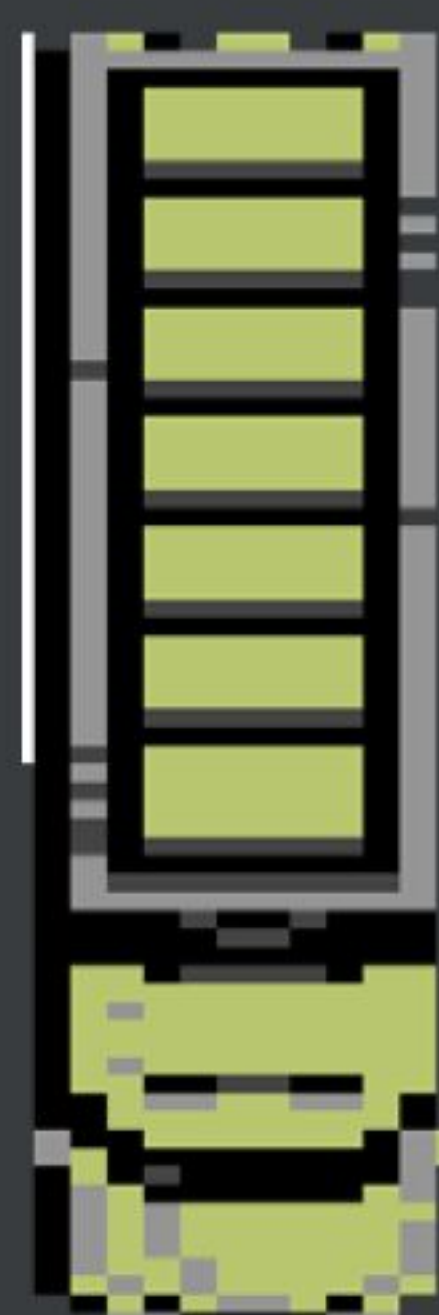
and save lives. It's quite similar to the work we do here at ZZAP! 64 really.

The car park is viewed from above, and cars can only be moved in the ways you'd expect of a sliding block puzzle; namely, forwards or reversed into any space in front of or behind them. You don't operate a crane, so there's no picking up vehicles and moving them sideways. You have a time limit in which to complete the task, but if you're able to complete a level quickly, you may be awarded a bonus in the form of a coloured badge. What in the Blue Peter?!

Gold, silver, and bronze awards are up for grabs on each of the 80 levels (it's multi-storey); surely an incentive to any trainee ambulance driver? What's more, if you fail to achieve an award on any level, you're able to go back and try again. Lives and public safety be damned! Upon completion of the game, you'll be given a rank



according to your successes across all 80 days. What rank will you see bestowed upon our aspiring ambulancemanorwoman?



I've played a number of retro instances of this over the years (*Jammed*, *Crazy Valet*, and *Vectrex Rush Hour* to name but three), however *Gridlock* is arguably the best presented and polished example I've encountered. Polish and glitter can't disguise a turd though [*Gary Glitter?* – Ed], so it's with relief I discovered the gameplay and extras matched the looks. The first three days went by fairly smoothly, but then it cranks up the challenge. The great thing is, you'll always get there in the end regardless of the time limit, with the option of resetting the level immediately if required. The medal system thus is another nice touch to elongate the game's longevity past simply beating all eighty levels. We've been blessed with three excellent puzzlers this issue, and it's a hard job to separate them. [*Thank you for your service.* – Ed]





"ANY TRAFFIC SCENES TO GO WITH THIS JAM?"



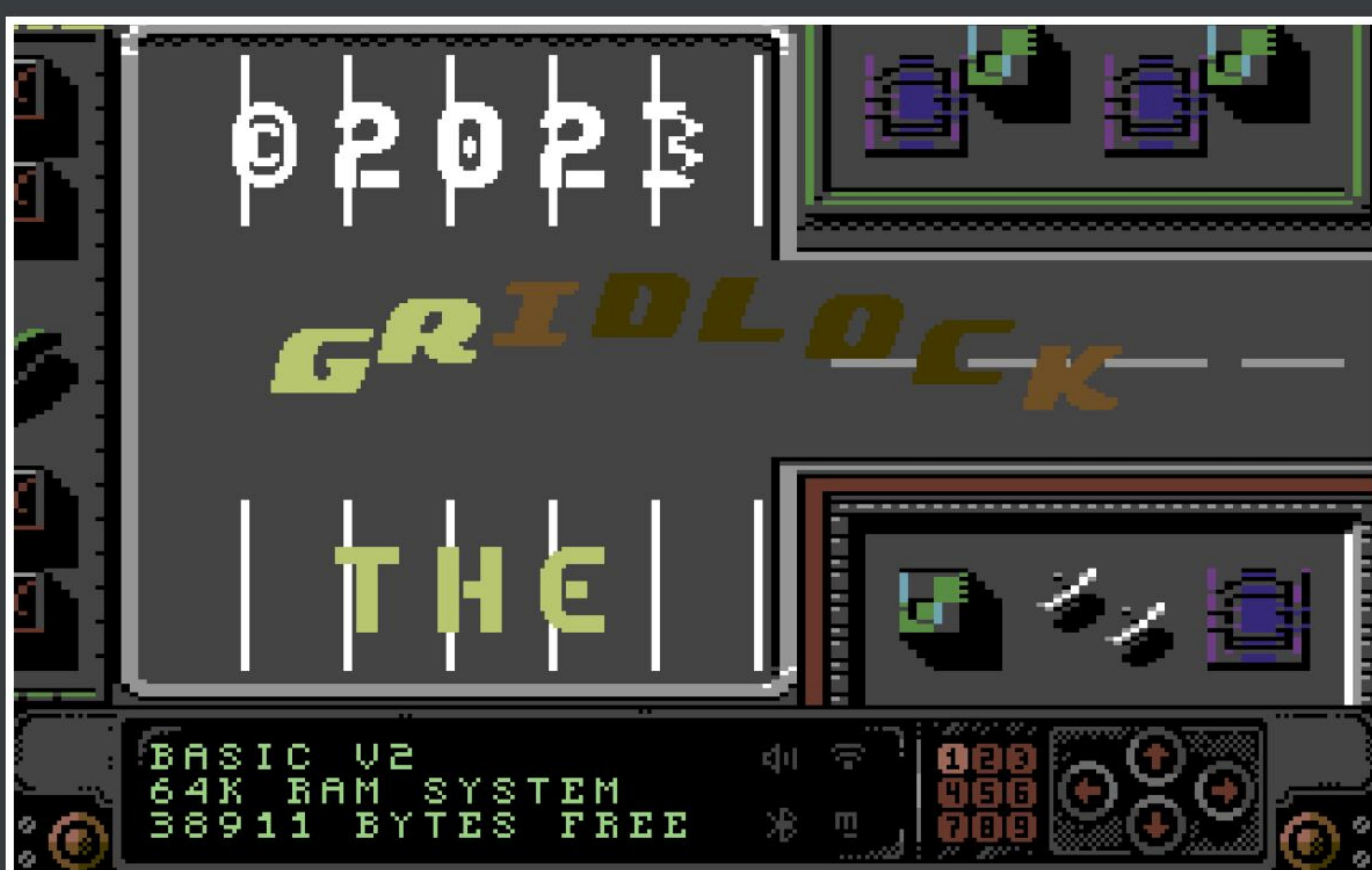
TEST



I have something of a reputation for disliking puzzle games [ya think?! – Ed]. To be fair, it's warranted, but some have kept me occupied and entertained for ages, and *Gridlock* has been added to that list. It all seems easy enough at first, but once you get up to around Call eight you need a think a bit, and past Call 20, your brain will be given a real workout. I've never found it frustrating though, and even though I haven't quite completed it yet, I've always worked out a level eventually. Because there's a stats screen showing your accomplishments, you'll be drawn back to try and get a gold badge for every Call. It's touches like this which are essential in increasing the longevity of a game, and many would do well to learn from it. *Gridlock* is an excellent game - I love it!



You wait ages for a traffic-related puzzle game, and then two come along at once - Spectrum owners got the very similar *Jam* from Clive Townsend earlier this year. But how does the C64 implementation compare? Very favourably, from the lovely overhead view of the car park to the changing music as you solve levels. Control is easy to understand, and the difficulty curve is brilliantly smooth; as you get through the days, you can tell that the puzzles get more complex. Going after the gold badges for completing levels quickly will keep you playing, and 80 levels is a tremendous amount to play through. A stylish puzzle game from Megastyle that is right up my street.



PRESENTATION: 94%

Comprehensive instructions showcasing a wealth of useful options, including save points and badges to win.

GRAPHICS: 80%

It's a robot, Roy. Erm, I mean, recognisable vehicles and backgrounds with a colourful and functional UI.

SOUND: 88%

An excellent array of LukHash tunes keeps you nee-nahhing forward.

HOOKABILITY: 92%

Parking has never been so much fun, with a gradual increase in difficulty.

LASTABILITY: 90%

It'll take a long time to get gold badges on all 80 levels, Doc.

OVERALL 91%

Brake for nobody and run over a copy of this as soon as you can.





Christmas time, the time for giving, the time for a fat, sweaty man of dubious origin to rummage deep in his hefty sack and extract presents for children. Moving on, this time around, Santa has more of an issue. The production line is behind schedule because not all the

workers are present, making presents, in the present *[full marks for presentation – Ed]*. Your task as assigned gift messenger is to locate the three missing gnomes, I mean elves, by moving around the very pretty, white snow landscape in first person perspective, and deliver them

back to the factory so they can complete the job of finishing all their gifts. There snow place like gnome after all.



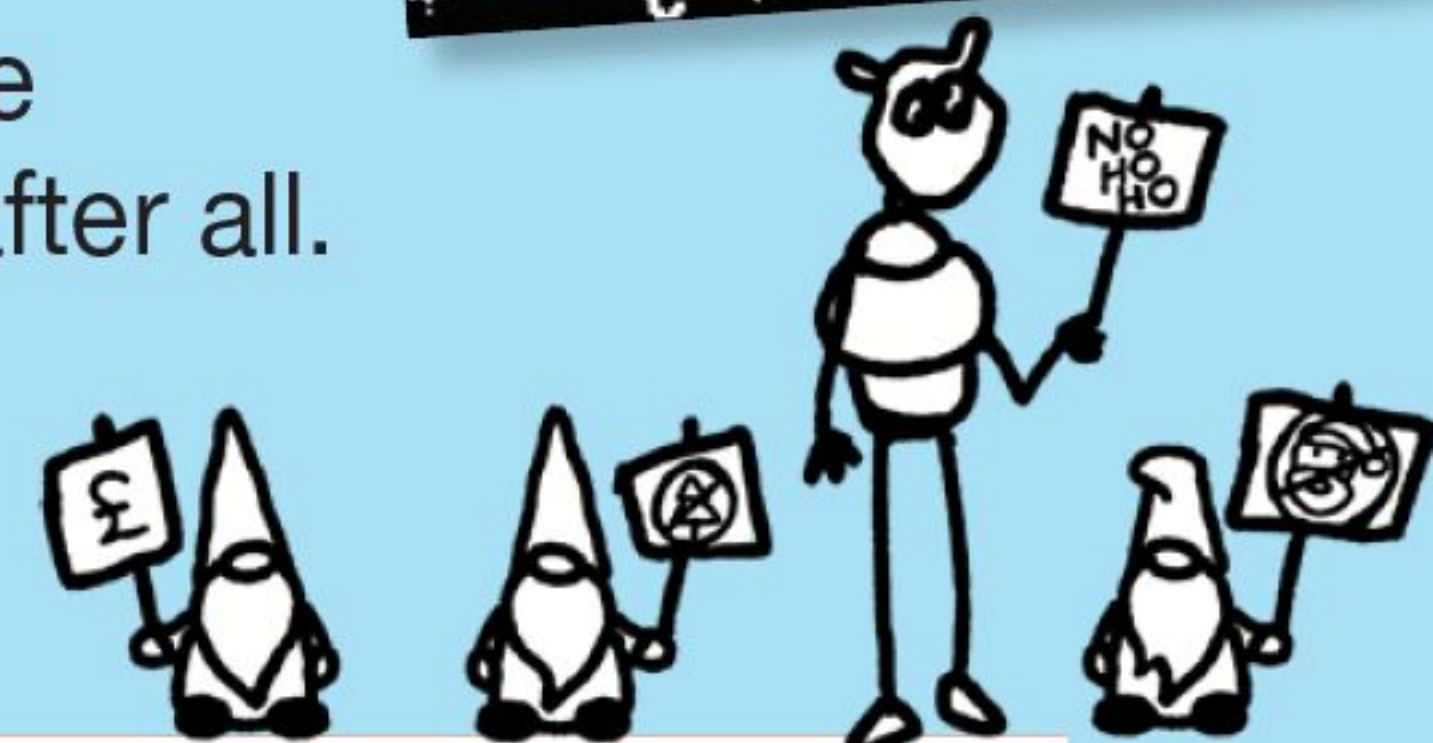
The 3D tech first seen in *Lykia* has been expanded

into a festive-themed first-person game - and unfortunately it is a little underwhelming. The frame rate is reasonable on a standard machine (with the SuperCPU version smoothing things out) and there are some nicely made textures. But certain features, notably the elves you have to find, appear very flat *[how do you know elves aren't flat in real life? – Ed]*. I did like the falling snow effect over the top though. It is also an incredibly short game, and I managed to finish it on my second go. With more work and interactions with the landscape/enemies, this would be fun. It's not quite a Christmas cracker.



It feels harsh to review this as it's more tech demo than

full game, but 'tis the season so here we are. As a game, it's the equivalent of putting your hand into the most beautifully-decorated Christmas stocking and finding a squidgy poo at the bottom *[tell us how you really feel Paul – Ed]*. It's very short *[may we suggest some laxatives? – Ed]*, and there's no interaction of any kind. It's simply a matter of navigating the maze and finding the three lost gnomes. However, it's an impressive game engine, and I'd love to see it expanded into a proper game. The in-game music is lovely, though. Hopefully this is a sign of great things to come.



"WE'RE NOT LOST, WE HATE THE BOSS!"

PRESENTATION: 66%

Pretty font in the intro screens, but limited options - choice of fullscreen or bordered game, plus SuperCPU support.

GRAPHICS: 73%

Snowy scenes made of chunky textures, with adequate if not speedy movement creating a nonetheless convincing world.

SOUND: 79%

Atmospheric in-game earworm and a decent *Times of Lore* cover on the title screen.

HOOKABILITY: 65%

Like opening a present, there is some initial excitement at playing in 3D.

LASTABILITY: 37%

The novelty soon wears off as the game can be completed quickly.

OVERALL 47%

An interesting tech demo with built-in game, so give it a Whirl for a little festive cheer.



RESEARCH PROJECT: Binary code addiction as a means of controlling the world
HEAD SCIENTIST: Prof NORMAN NUTZ PhD, BSc, KP
RESEARCH EQUIPMENT: C64, MEGA65, Cray-2
LAB ASSISTANT: The Geek



appy Yuletide, everyone! The last Christmas feels like yesterday and yet here we are again in the middle of the festive season. I'll probably have to punish that Geek with a little electrotherapy if I find out he's been fiddling with our time machine's

fast-forward button again. I have to admit that I've been trying unsuccessfully to remember the last time we had a Christmas-themed adventure in the ZZAP! 64 Christmas issue. It must have been ages ago. Well, I've got good news for you...

The Ghosts of Blackwood Manor is here and it takes

us back to a rather spooky Christmas in 1986. And it gets even better.

This time round, The Geek himself will test the eagerly awaited game extensively for you.

Wishing you all a splendid interactive ho ho horror!



ADVENTURE REVIEW



THE GHOSTS OF BLACKWOOD MANOR | on.mom/Wuvy

Stefan Vogt, Moonmist Entertainment, Fusion Retro Books / ZZAP!64



Firstly, full disclosure, I delved into my meticulous review of this game without realising that it is in fact part of the Kickstarter for something called a “ZZAP! 64 Annual”, whatever that is. Genuinely. What follows is therefore, by sheer luck, somewhat if not completely impartial. Especially as it is appearing here in CRASH magazine.

Am I a bit confused? Possibly. Have I had a Christmas tippie or twopple to calm my nerves about this Christmas ghost story? Yesh. Indeed, the release of *Ghosts of the Blackwood Manor* in the season of tinsel and tales brings a thrilling twist to the

holiday adventure gaming experience; as Christmas is a time when the telling of ghost stories is a tradition, this game serves as a digital hearth around which players like you and I can gather to unravel its mysteries. So come, gather, be warm. Be afraid.

The game greets its players with an intro that reminded this maltreated lab assistant of a favourite; *Dracula*. But it also introduces that the game is set in 1986, not the 1800s, and this only adds nostalgia to the festivities. Aren't we lucky? Well, not so as it may pan out.

The loader's graphics (above) deserve a mention as a striking example of the artistry possible within the

confines of 8-bit technology. The moody purples and blues of the night sky, the silhouette of the protagonist against the eerie glow of an imposing manor, and the foreboding bare branches all contribute to a sense of Gothic horror that is as much a visual treat as it is a nod to the genre's roots. This visual style not only serves to enhance the atmosphere but also plays a crucial role in storytelling, setting the tone before a single puzzle is encountered or a command is typed.

The scene set in the Great Hall, where the crackle of a warm fire (copycats!) and the description of a festively adorned Christmas tree are set against the backdrop of a howling snowstorm outside.



This juxtaposed setting, reminiscent of the cosy yet eerie atmosphere of a Christmas ghost story, immediately immerses the player in a world that is both inviting and mysterious. The visuals echo the textual narrative's power.

And those puzzles are interwoven with the narrative and the visuals, creating a seamless and holistic gaming experience. They are both challenging and deeply embedded in the game's world, ensuring that each revelation feels like a reward for the player's ingenuity and perseverance. I felt quite heartened at each solution, spurring me along the ghostly snowy path.

Interactivity in the game is commendable. It recognizes an extremely broad array of player inputs (more than I've ever seen), responding with detailed and often witty text that draws the player deeper into the game's world. The intuitive parser and the responsive nature of the game make the player feel truly engaged in the

unfolding story. Special mention must go to the multiple choice options given to guide you along your journey, reminiscent of more modern affairs like *Cyberpunk 2077* which uses a similar technique. We shall call this *Cyberghost 1986* then. When conversing with a character, normally one might not know what to say (we've all been there!), but the game helpfully gives you a few choices. I would quite like that for real life.

I won't spoil too much more for you, but in terms of lasting appeal, this game promises to be a classic, much like the Christmas ghost stories that have endured through the ages. Its blend of engaging narrative, and thoughtful puzzles, ensure that players will find themselves returning to its mysteries time and again. The game's multiple pathways and outcomes only add to its replayability, offering new secrets with every play through. Indeed there are multiple possible endings, ranging from good to, well, baaad. But each will help you towards that ultimate reward.

Overall, *Ghosts of Blackwood Manor* is an essential experience for enthusiasts of both retro

gaming and the Christmas horror tradition. It captures the essence of the Commodore 64 adventure experience while providing a fresh yet also traditional and captivating story for modern players.



The game is a testament to the enduring charm of text-based adventures, proving that they can still engage and enthrall us, in a world otherwise so unnecessarily full of high-resolution gaming (*Cyberpunk* I'm looking at you, punk). Ask for this in your stocking and let it haunt you in the best possible way. Spook you later adventurers, and Happy Chrimbo.

Atmosphere	95%
Puzzle Factor	90%
Interaction	88%
Lastability	92%
Overall	93%



"STAY STILL
DAMMIT!"



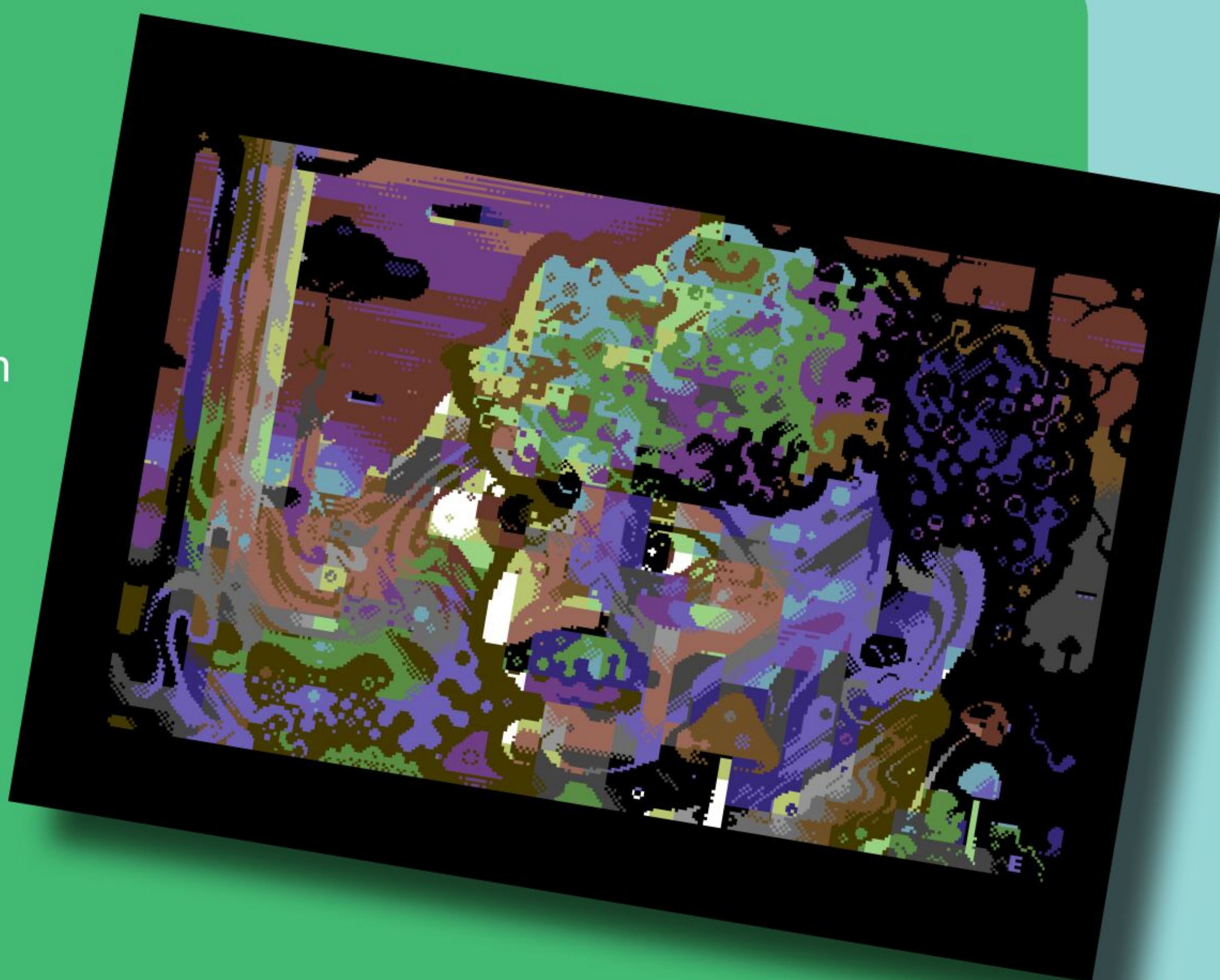
The sands of 2023 are fast slipping away but there's no shortage of quality Commodore creativity if one knows where to look. But even when I'm not focused on the usual websites, pieces

of amazing work seem to float into my sphere of attention. This month's candidates are two such examples. So, without further ado let's head into the gallery and check them out.

Country for Old Man

by Electric | 2015

A smashing hi-res piece here that references the work of Cormac McCarthy in the title while perhaps suggesting that the C64 is the domain of a certain age bracket these days, who knows? The general chaos of the abstract swirling shapes around the head of a man who looks suspiciously like Kurt Vonnegut contain amoeboid clusters, the base of what could be either a tree trunk or the base of a towering eruption, and a giant glaring eyeball. Lovely stuff.



Two Weeks After Halloween

by Katon | 2022

It's not even two weeks since Halloween as I write this, but being the Grinch that I am about almost any public "holiday" regardless of its validity, I have to state that All-Hallows Eve has rarely been so well represented in the world of the double-wide pixel. The leering pumpkins are beautifully crafted as are the bats fluttering behind the rather dapper owl sat atop the gravestone. There is an unhealthy glow to the piece which transmits the general creepy vibe of the image and nails the subject perfectly.

Spook-tacular work.



BATTERY



Price: \$ free | digital

Developer: Roman Werner (2023)

Link: on.mom/pmTT



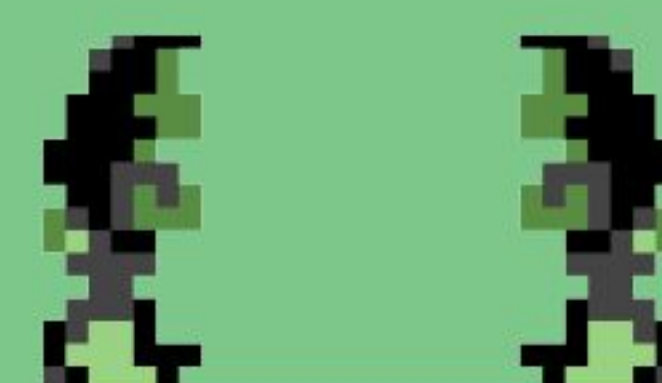
"THESE TIME LORDS CAN'T EVEN SPELL PHD"

Strange things are afoot on the Commodore 64, dudes, as this Game Boy title gets a belated conversion. In this most excellent adventure, the Grim Reaper wants to rid the world of our compadres, which would be non-triumphant in the extreme! In order to stop this heinous act, our heroes must travel back through time and collect the stolen time fragments that can stop the evil De Nomolos (Ed Solomon backwards) in his tracks. Our heroes must tackle ten adventures, set over fifty levels (should have been 69, dudes!), if they're to stop him and his evil Bill and Ted robots.

Each level has ten stars, and all must be collected if the time machine is to appear to whisk the boys onto their next challenge. Sounds easy, but there are

all kinds of historical dudes patrolling the platforms and they'll make life very difficult for our time travelling twosome. Luckily, there are plenty of bodacious power-ups to collect that will aid the lads in their quest, and

they can also add extra lives to the eight they begin with, so there's no reason to leave Bill and Ted as dust in the wind when you can save the day and avoid a San Dimas Meltdown!



This one crashed onto my C64 with a bang that's more excellent than a Wyld Stallyns concert. I had no idea what to expect but finding it's a faux Game Boy emulator in C64's groovy threads – talk about a time warp! What is this, a MEGA 65?! Bodacious speech? Check! Rockin' tunes? Absolutely! The music's so good, you'll think Beethoven's time travelled with the lads and put a SID in his piano. And yes time travel's the name of the game here – right up my street and perfect for wannabe time lords. But wait, it's a platformer? Gnarly, but about as fresh as *Jet Set's Willy*. By that I mean it's as traditional as a pepperoni pizza – tasty, but you know what you're getting (remember what I said about *Rocky & Co*). In essence, it's a tech marvel with a side of “been there, jumped that.” Still, it's a radical ride through time and sound. Not the most triumphant gameplay, but original in its wrapper and definitely worth a... <plays air guitar>





TEST



Station dude, this is totally non-heinous! The official C64 game may have been underwhelming, but this tribute rocks. The timey-wimey effect and the border really evoke the Game Boy, and the subtle use of colours gives the graphics plenty of depth. Having the chance to zap through time and tackle any level is appreciated, and the way the game mechanics change gives added depth. Decent music and controls work, although the playing area feels as confining as a phone booth at times. I do worry about the long-term appeal but then we are all just dust in the wind, dude. Enjoy some Wyld Stallyns action while it lasts. <Joins CS in an air guitar duet>



Well dudes, I didn't see this one coming. Sometimes it's good to be blind-sided by the unexpected, though, and this is one such case. It's a simple platformer, but it's a lot of fun to play. The Game Boy aesthetic has been pulled off brilliantly, with the yellowed display looking very authentic. Sound-wise it's fine, with good-if-unspectacular SID-ified versions of the original music and FX. Fun-wise, it's a blast, with the action feeling very familiar, meaning it's a cinch to get into. The difficulty ramps up across the ten eras, and although it won't take forever to complete, you'll feel totally bodacious when you do. There's nothing heinous about this game; it really is excellent. <Makes it an air guitar trio>

**PRESENTATION: 88%**

Incredibly authentic look, the option to start on any level, and a handy autosave.

GRAPHICS: 79%

An interesting mix of C64 and Game Boy, which works very well.

SOUND: 82%

Accurate 64-style renditions of the original's sounds.

HOOKABILITY: 86%

Simple but really enjoyable, this will appeal to any platformer fan.

LASTABILITY: 81%

Gets progressively more challenging, but won't take ages to complete.

OVERALL 84%

A bodacious bit of platforming action that's totally worth playing, dudes.

"STRANGE THINGS
ARE AFOOT
AT THE
CIRCLE-K"





Back

Issue 17

Paul Davies looks back at the original
Issue #17 of ZZAP! 64 magazine



You know that expression when one says 'I was spitting blood' meaning that they were very angry? Well, it turns out that you don't have to be angry should you want to do that literally, as you can spit blood just by getting whacked across the face with a flail - such is the predicament one of our cover stars finds himself in this September 1986 issue. Yes, it looks painful, and

yes, no doubt he'll have to head to A&E to get his face/head/jaw/teeth looked at afterwards (with a lot of explaining to do as well, I may wager), but isn't it good to show someone that you mean something, rather than it just being a throwaway expression? Put your all into everything, I always say. This issue isn't all just about literal expressions, of course, the scrap going on across

the cover relates to the gratuitous violence inside as ZZAP! takes a look at *Knight Games* from *English Software*. Gratuitous violence? Looks like we're on for a good issue already. All we need now is a preview of thirteen up-and-coming games from *U.S. Gold*... wait a minute! ZZAP! You must be reading my mind!

Big news in the editorial first as there are a few movers and shakers this

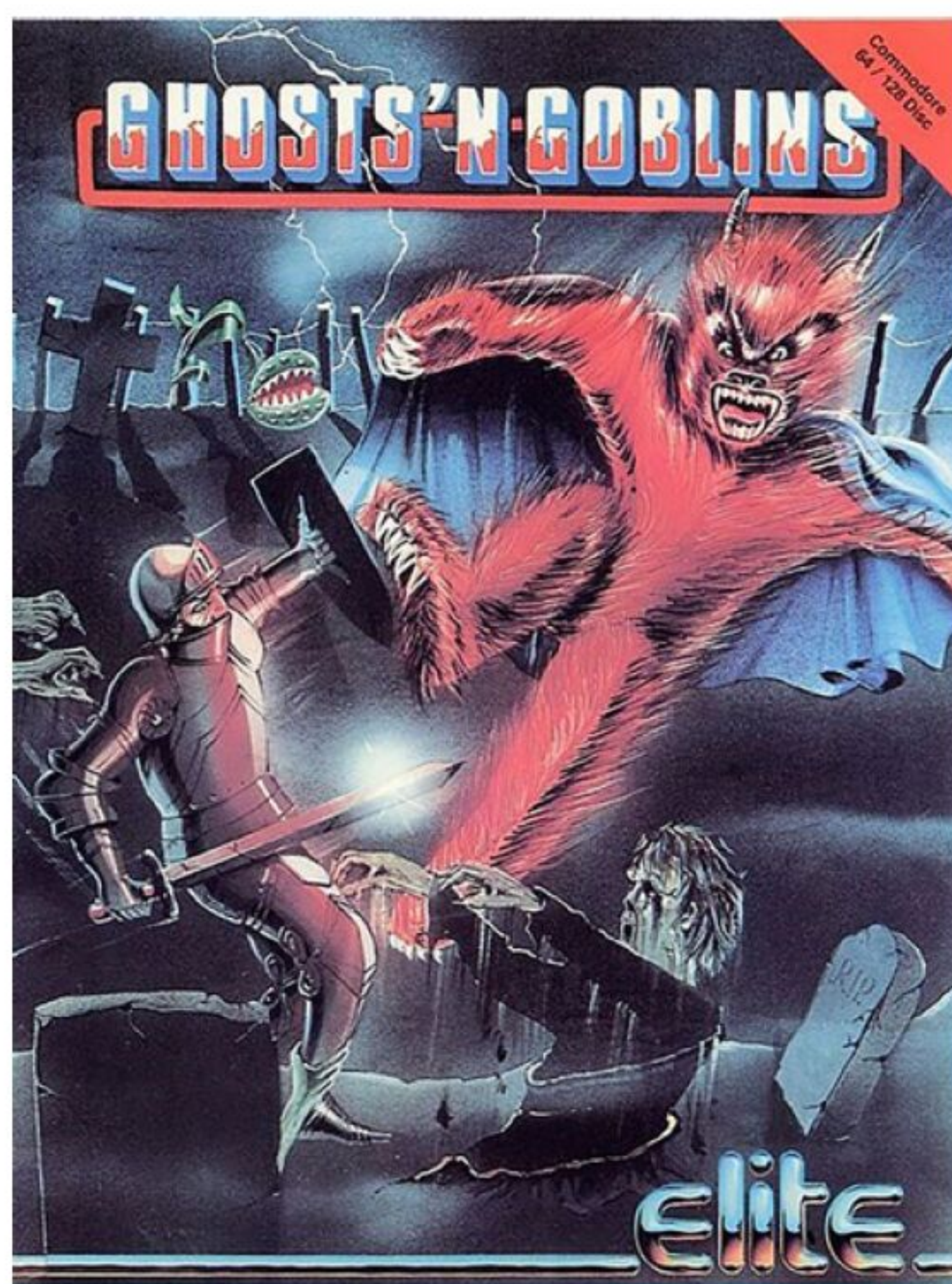
month at ZZAP! We learned last month that Gary Liddon was off to pastures new at *Thalamus Software* though after crying and despair (no doubt) his replacement has arrived, and he goes by the name of Richard 'Dick' Eddy (I'd stick to Richard, mate) who hails from Cornwall. Didn't know



they had electricity down there? Another new addition is Jonathan Rignall which is a name you may be familiar with, well surname anyway. "Any relation?" you may ask, and I may say "Yes. Yes it is." as it's no other than the grandma - no wait, brother - of ZZAP! stalwart Julian Rignall. In case you were worried, he's not here to

take over any of Julian's jobs as he's been hidden away in the attic of Newsfield working on the arty aspects of the magazine. Finally, the BIGGEST news in terms of a change of staff is that this issue is the final one to be edited by Sir Roger of Kean! Roger is leaving to edit a different magazine altogether and with another familiar name – Lloyd Mangram. Yes, THE Lloyd Mangram. The magazine will be titled L.M. and will be aimed at the youth market (so, that's still us, right?) though Roger is not Keen (haha, yes I did just do that) to tell us any more about it until a free copy of it arrives with the special Christmas edition of ZZAP! Despair not though my friends as Roger leaves ZZAP! in very responsible hands... well... if you call letting your Little Computer Person starve to death responsible, then I guess there's nothing to worry about. From issue 18 Gary Penn takes over and keeps Roger's editing chair warm for the foreseeable and beyond. Lord help us all!

Ghosts are scary, and goblins are scary, so the guys who came up with the game *Ghosts 'n' Goblins*, must have really wanted to get everyone hiding behind their joystick. Why I'm mentioning this can only mean one thing. Yes, that's right, *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* is here on the



and have to run about in your pants. Ha. Immature to laugh at? Probably. But come on, running around haunted hills, graveyards, and (the perhaps most unfortunate for this fella) ice palaces (it's freezing in there... honest, babe), how can you not snigger? Hee hee. Pants.

Anyway, if you're a fan of the arcade, then you'll be very happy to learn that



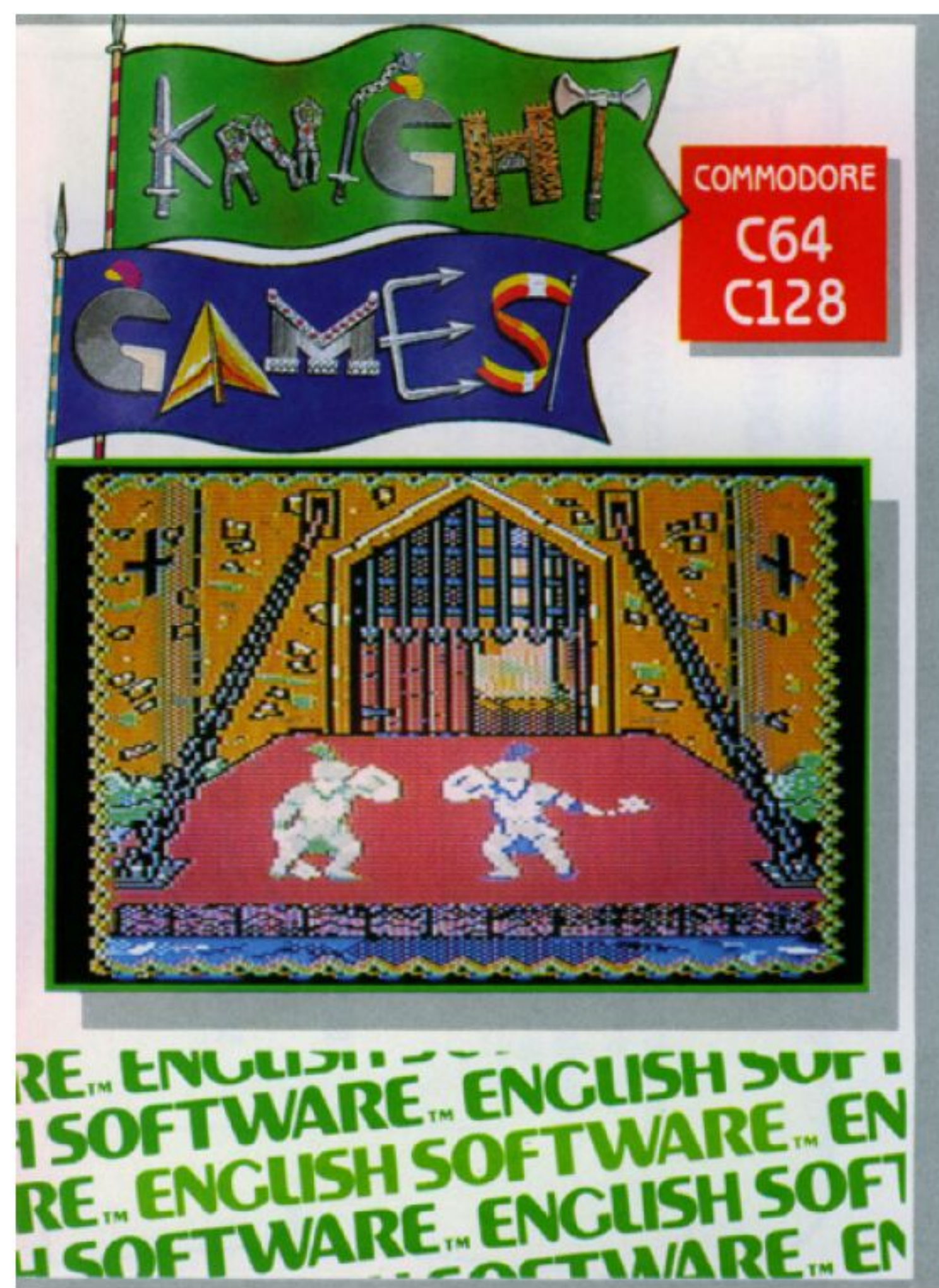
64! It's a shame that the Spectrum got it first (boo!) but doubtless, this version is better. If you don't know the story yet, *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* is an arcade game that puts you in control of a brave knight who has had his lady kidnapped by a demon, and you must take on his hordes of monsters – ghosts and goblins, if you will – and save her. The memorable thing about this game, aside from its general greatness, is that when you take a hit from an enemy, you lose your armour



Elite has done a fantastic conversion of this with all of the ZZAP! 64 team loving it. 97% will do nicely, thank you very much, and well deserving of its GOLD MEDAL.

As I don't want that poor knight on this month's cover who lost many teeth to have done so in vain, I think it's only fair to look at the game of which he made such a sacrifice to promote. *Knight Games* is a beat 'em up of sorts, though in a mediaeval way with many different fighting games to play. Not content with just a swordfight, *English Software* has pushed the boat out and has come up with eight games for you to get to grips with – six fighters and two sporting challenges. The latter two are archery and crossbow, which involve you trying to get your specified projectile the closest to the middle of the target. But enough of that, let's just get to the gratuitous violence. The aforementioned swordfight makes an appearance along with battles titled Axeman (fighting with axes, unsurprisingly), Ball and Chain, Pike Staff (sounds pointy), Quarterstaff which is basically balancing on a log with another opponent trying to get them to fall off by prodding them with a large stick, and... Swordfight II. I

guess they ran out of ideas at that point.



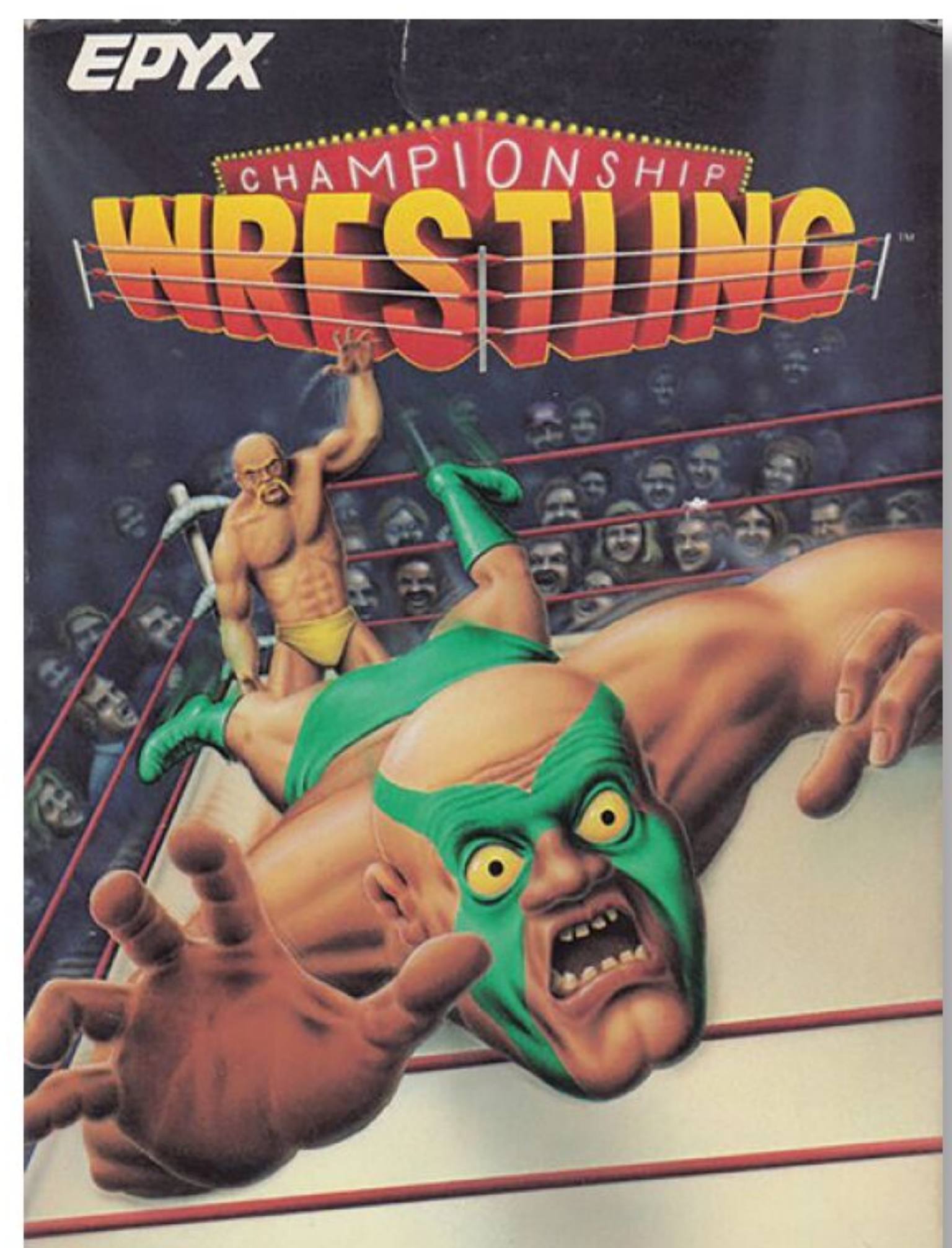
Full of great gameplay, excellent metal clanking sounds, well-animated swinging balls (good lord), and a mediaeval soundtrack from David Whittaker, it does seem to tick all the boxes for all you need in a game where you can swing a sword, a stick, and your balls to knock out your opponent. Lovely stuff that deserves its SIZZLER for sure.

Next up, it's time to get all American with previews of fourteen forthcoming releases from *US Gold*. And yes, before you say it I

know at the start I said thirteen new releases but that's only because that's what it said on the cover (honest) though inside it says fourteen. Maybe I should just count

them to ensure I don't go on sounding like an idiot any longer than I should. *counts games* Yep. Fourteen. It may be a bit of a slog to go through all fourteen so let's see if I can pick out what looks like the best of the rather large bunch.

If your love of wrestling was somewhat tarnished by the release of *Rock 'n' Wrestle* then despair not, as *Championship Wrestling* may well be here to save the day, and previous love, of the 'sport'. From the screenshot provided, it certainly looks a lot more detailed and will be more realistic, and more enjoyable to play on top of that, the crowd also gets involved in the shenanigans - just like they should, in my opinion.



One of the biggest and most popular arcade games ever – *Gauntlet* – is another on the list to be making its way to the 64, with the developer *Gremlin Graphics* confident





that they can bring all the magic, and all the levels, to the 64 to make it a thorough conversion to be enjoyed in the comfort of your own home. If you're anything like me, then you would have pumped quite a few coins into your local *Gauntlet* machine, so news of a home computer conversion will be a welcome one for many.

Now, I'm absolutely rubbish at ten-pin bowling in real life so imagine my joy when I read that there's a game that will be available soon that may take away all of the pain suffered in real life when playing, by making me look good playing a virtual version. *10th Frame* is a game that I'm hoping will do just that. No more



hiding my head in shame as I walk back to the bench, no more people pointing and laughing at me, no more overall scores of 17, and most importantly – no more bloody awful bowling shoes.

“I have the POWER!” shouts a man wearing furry pants and little else on TV over the last couple of years. No, not Kenny Everett – it's HE-MAN! The most powerful man in the universe! The cartoons rule. The figures rule. The castles in which you can play with said figures rule (especially the Skeletor one with the built-in microphone) and now we can hope that He-Man's foray onto the 64 can do the same in his upcoming game *He-Man and The Masters of the Universe*. Will

Cringer be in it? Will Man-at-Arms be in it? Will Orko be in it? Will Fisto be in it? Will Moss Man be in it? Too many, in't. But all I can say is that I'm very excited about this one, (as you may have guessed) and I can't wait to see the finished article. Excellent times are ahead!

What a great way to end this issue with the news that He-Man (the most powerful man in the universe after Kenny Everett) is on his way to Commodore Land along with some other great sounding games and the odd arcade conversion. It's a great time to be a 64 owner and it will only get better.



Come back next time for more ramblings, more excitement, and hopefully more talk of He-Man.

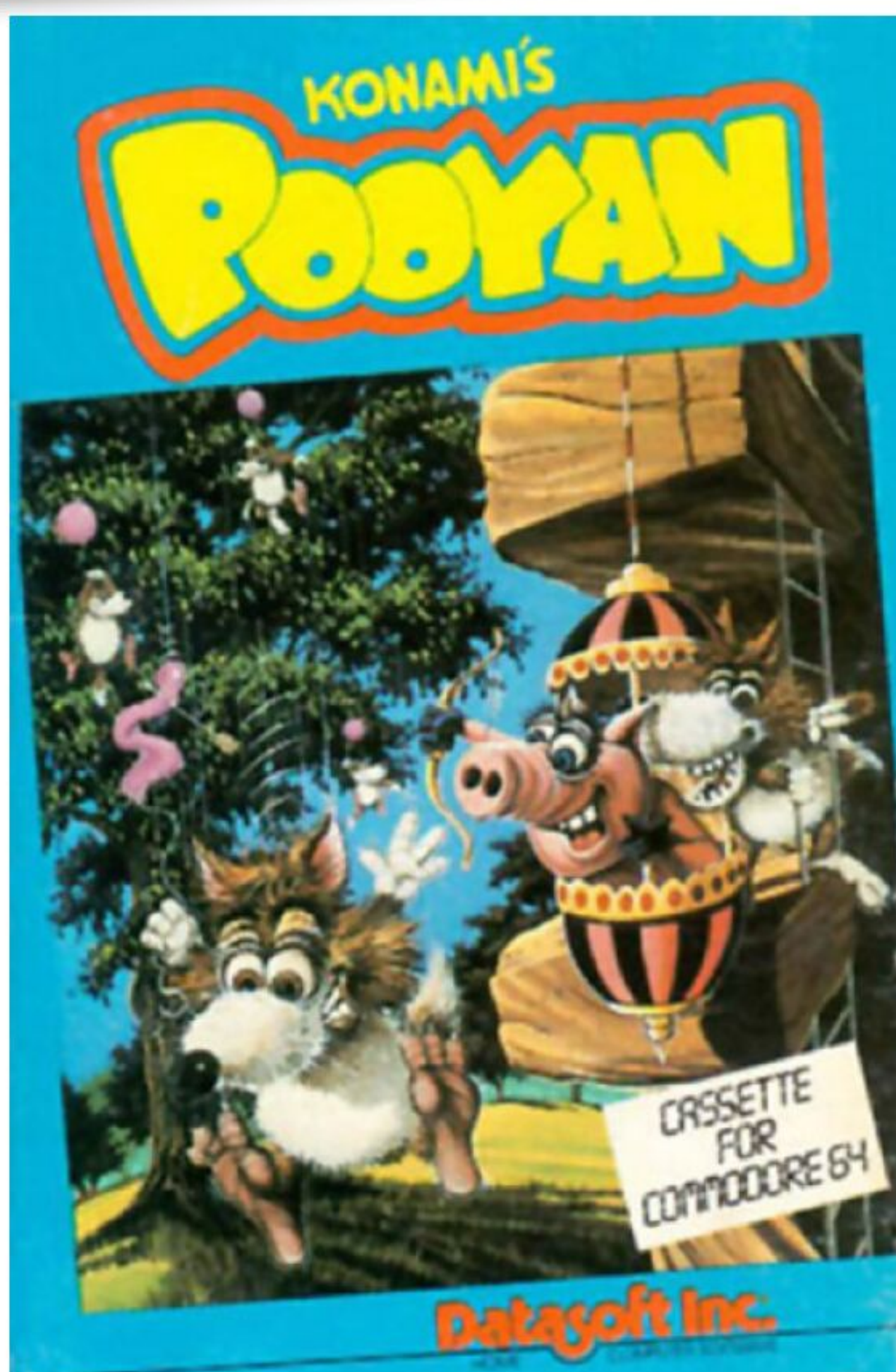
He's the second most powerful man in the universe, you know.

THE COMMODORE CAREER OF SCOTT SPANBURG

Scott Spanburg might not ring bells in every gaming den, but his C64 works are legendary. Andrew Fisher gives us the low-down on Scott's epic coding journey. At Datasoft, Scott programmed Atari 8-bit and C64 classics, working alongside his Atari ace brother, John. Datasoft were the brains behind converting arcade hits like Nichibutsu's *Moon Shuttle* and legendary titles *Bruce Lee*, *Zorro*, and *Conan*. But what games did C64 guru Scott's career Span? This is the tip of the ice-Burg.

POOYAN, 1983

C64 and Atari 8-bit conversion programmed by Scott Spanburg



Is it a poo? Is it a yan? No it's...

Konami's cute arcade game was inspired by the *Three Little Pigs* story, with Mama Pig protecting her piglets from the hungry wolves who are in a huff.

There are two types of level. The first sees the wolves descend on balloons from the top of the screen, trying to climb the ladder to attack Mama, as wolves are well known to do. Mama moves up and down in the gondola, shooting arrows to pop the balloons. Hitting the wolf makes the arrow deflect downwards. Brings a whole new meaning to A Pig Quest.

Occasionally a piece of meat appears at the top; this

can be grabbed and thrown in an arc, making the wolves let go of their balloons to grab it.

The second level type sees wolves run in and grab balloons to reach the top of the screen. Here they team up to push a rock onto Mama's gondola. Oh ship! Bonus rounds see Mama shooting more wolves before they escape. The C64 version is slightly slower-paced than the arcade, and while the graphics are okay, the colour palette is a little limited. It is a competent but tricky conversion, but *Pooyan* was released too early for a *ZZAP! 64* review. Hmm...



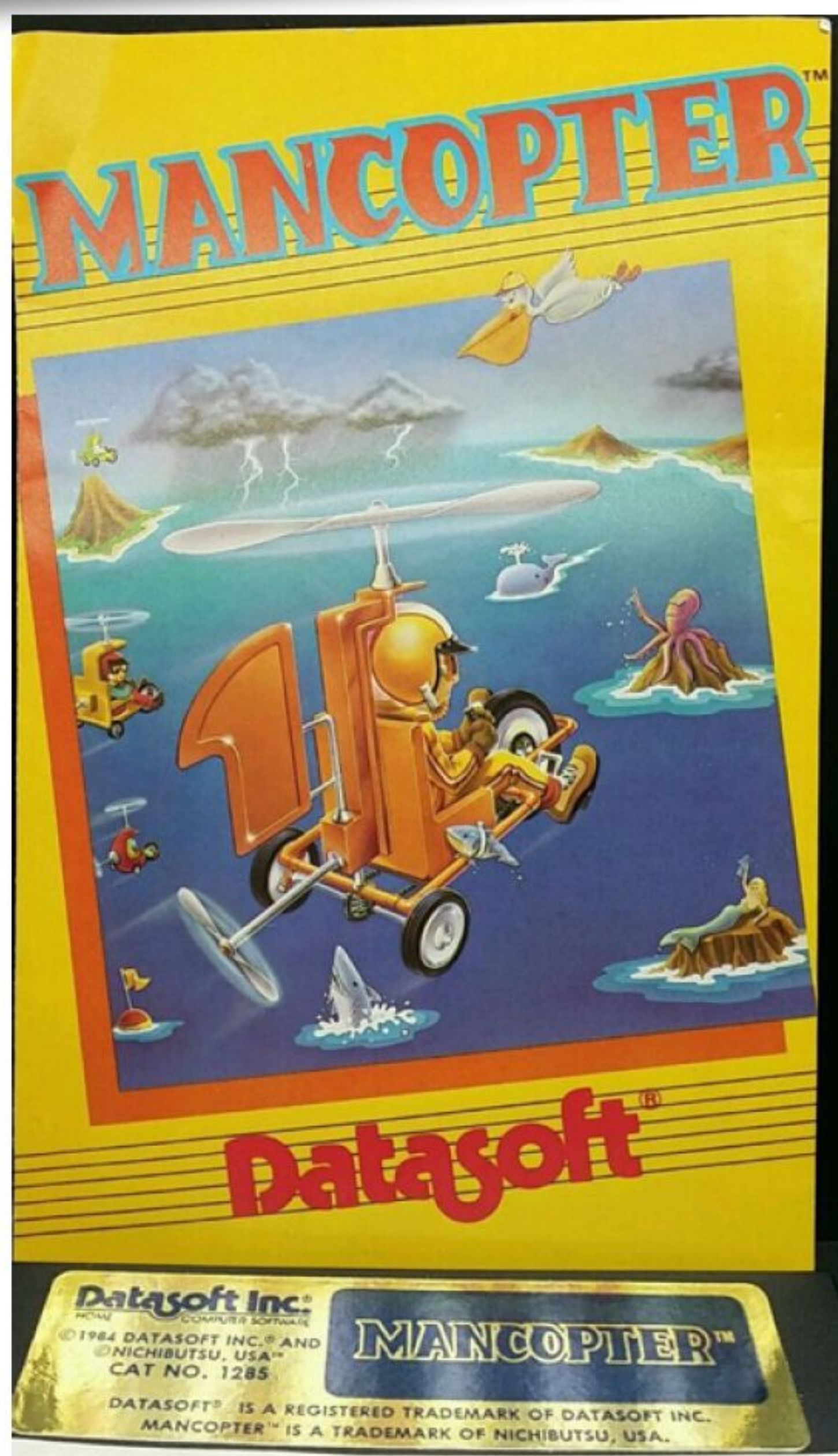
Hey there's the Scott fella again.



Bonus Round #1 from Pooyan, where you must stop the wolves escaping on balloons, obviously.

MANCOPTER, 1984

C64 programming
by Scott Spanburg



Cover of Mancopter

This is a hidden gem in the C64's back catalogue that everyone should play.

One or two players take control of a human-powered gyrocopter in a race against multiple enemies, pressing Fire repeatedly to stay airborne. Unusually the screen scrolls from right to left, the opposite to many games. Like *Joust* or *Balloon Flight*, the player can hit an enemy from above to take them out – but must avoid being hit from above themselves. Splash down in the drink? No sweat! Fling a fish and whoosh! A whale hoists you high. Fishless? It's chomp time with Mr. Shark. Grab fishy refills from sea-sweet mermaids or pelican pickpockets—watch those empty beaks! Zip past zappy lightning and bouncy octopuses (octopi?), and twist through tight mangrove mazes. Keep those fins flipping!

Cute graphics and okay sound add to the

atmosphere, and it gets really challenging in later sections of the race. There is mention of *Nichibutsu* in the game, but it is not an arcade conversion.

Mancopter also missed out on a *ZZAP! 64* review, but *Commodore Format* gave it a glowing 85% rating in issue 42's Touch of Class feature on golden oldies. Hmm maybe we should rectify things in this issue...



Waiting on the start line for the Mancopter race to begin.



Man up and Cop-ter load of this.



A passing pelican can give or take fish.



Deep in the mangroves, this pilot has been eaten by Mr Shark.

THE GOONIES, 1985

C64 game design & programming by Scott Spanburg, credited with game design on other formats



US Gold(en) cover of The Goonies

The cult classic Chris Columbus film might seem an odd choice for a computer game, but the result was a very innovative 8-bit title – with later games by Konami across console and computer differing

completely. Scott's idea was to use the cooperative nature of the *Goonies* gang, with one or two players helping each other complete devious puzzles. On each of the eight screens, the solo player can switch between two Goonies. The first task is to escape the house by evading the Witch. Which Witch? Don't ask me. One Goonie must push a chair to reach the attic ladder, before activating the money press to distract Mrs Witch.

The other Goonie can then knock over the water cooler to extinguish the fire in the fireplace, revealing the hidden door to the tunnels. Both must then escape into the tunnel. Fun! Later levels include more devious puzzles involving levers and switches while avoiding bats and a giant octopus (octopussies?) before reaching One Eyed Willie's pirate ship to get the treasure. An animated end sequence awaits ahoy!

Even with the hints in the manual, this was very tricky to play, but unique for the time. *ZZAP! 64* evaluated the *US Gold* import before the reviewers had seen the movie, with a 67% score; the final comment was "Fun, but we hope the movie's better". Gary Penn did say the eight screens were "inventive and challenging in their own right" though.

US Gold distributed the C64 version in Europe, commissioning Paragon Software to create a ZX Spectrum conversion. The music in this European release was different, due to licensing issues over the Cyndi Lauper theme tune. *The Goonies* would be re-released as part of *US Gold's "History in the Making"* compilation, which got an 81% rating from a *ZZAP! 64* compilation feature. Scott then moved on to MicroProse where he was involved in a different type of game...



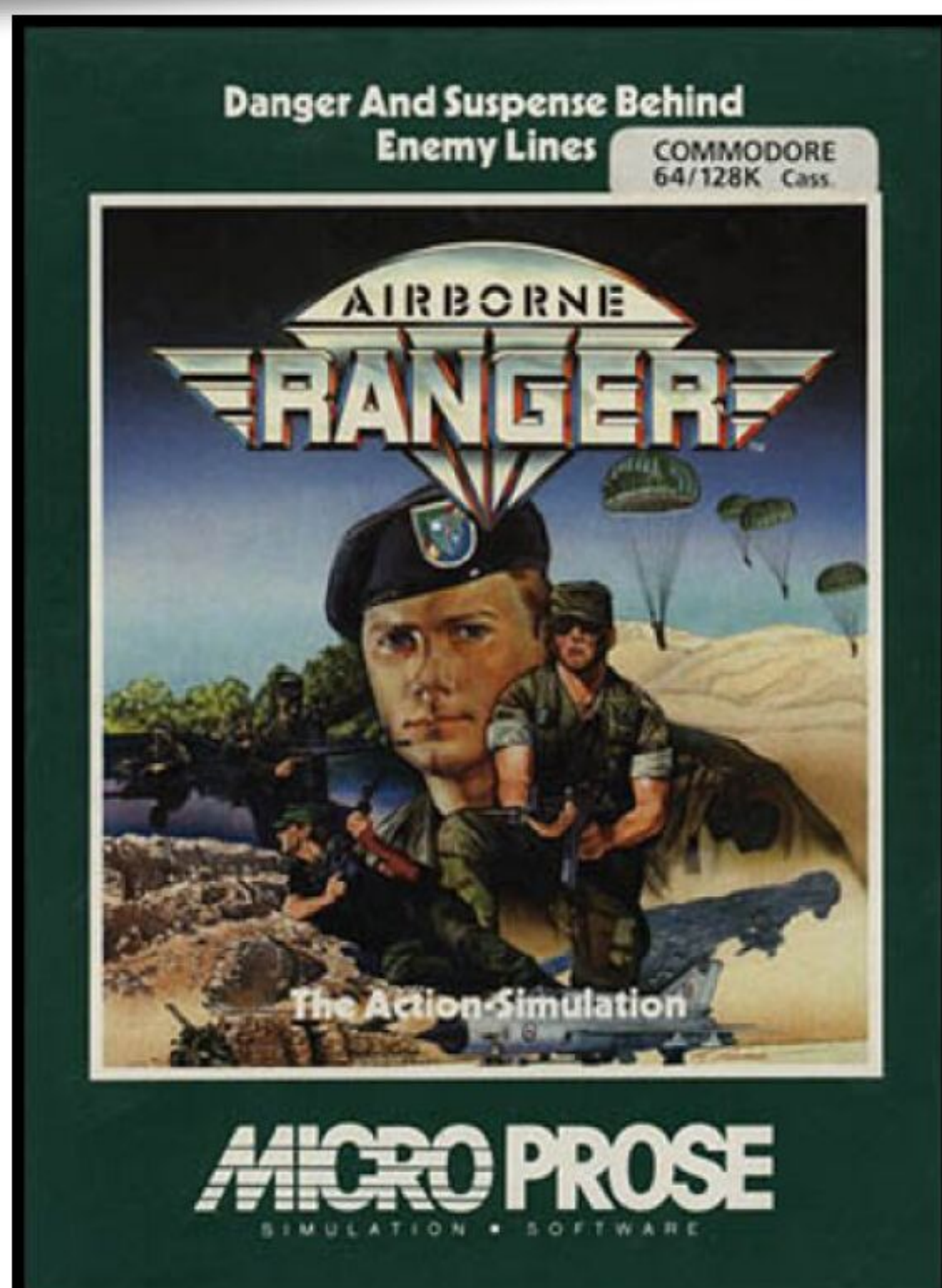
There's that Scott guy yet again!



Use the money press to distract the Witch on level 1.

AIRBORNE RANGER, 1987

C64 game development by Scott Spanburg.



You can't put Scott in a box. Except this.

Scott was part of the team that turned MicroProse founder Bill "Wild Bill" Stealy's idea of an "action simulation" based on the famed US Airborne Rangers into a game. The coding team were immortalised in pixels for the credits screen. The player can choose a practice Ranger or a veteran Ranger from the roster stored on a separate disk. Rangers captured in action can then

be rescued in later missions. Like *Gunship*, completing missions and earning medals gives the Ranger a promotion. At the start of each mission, the Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft is flown over the target area to drop up to three supply crates. When the green light comes on, the Ranger parachutes into action and can be steered using their parafoil. Landing switches to a closer view of the Ranger himself, who can walk, run, and crawl through the obstacles – including minefields and trenches.

Making too much noise will attract more enemy troops so waggle your joystick quietly. The map shows where the objective and the extraction point are, with time ticking down until the Osprey returns. Function keys switch between weapons, including the carbine, grenades, LAW rockets, and knife. The target indicator can be rotated through 32 positions for accurate attacks. Time bombs – with a 5, 10, or 15-second fuse – can be planted. Finding the supply

crates you dropped will top up ammunition. Each mission has a nifty procedurally-generated map, making for more variety. Complete the objectives and reach the extraction point to gain a mission assessment and possibly a medal.

ZZAP! 64's verdict was a little harsh – not helped by the long cassette multi-load – with a 73% rating, commenting "Lots of action and some real-time strategy, but it's vastly overpriced" (at £14.99 on cassette and £19.99 on disk, with the large manual and keyboard overlay). It is a game that remains a firm favourite for many C64 fans.

Scott stayed at MicroProse for several years, working on strategy games including *M-1 Tank Platoon* and *F-15 Strike Eagle III*. He was a programmer on the 1999 PC game *Gunship*. More recently he has worked on *The Elder Scrolls Online*, *Sid Meier's Civilisation VI*, and *XCOM Chimera Squad*. Quite the Span!



Doesn't look very airborne does he.



Pick up the bag of supplies you dropped earlier to replenish your ammunition. Supplies supplies!



Credit where due (that's here).

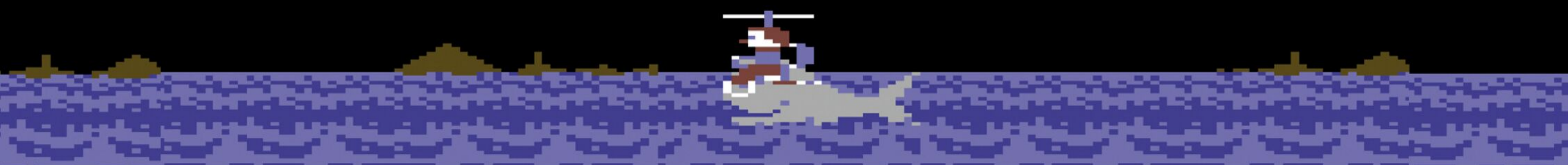


REVIEW

Mat Allen et al take a look back at a game released in ZZAP!-less times! The horror!

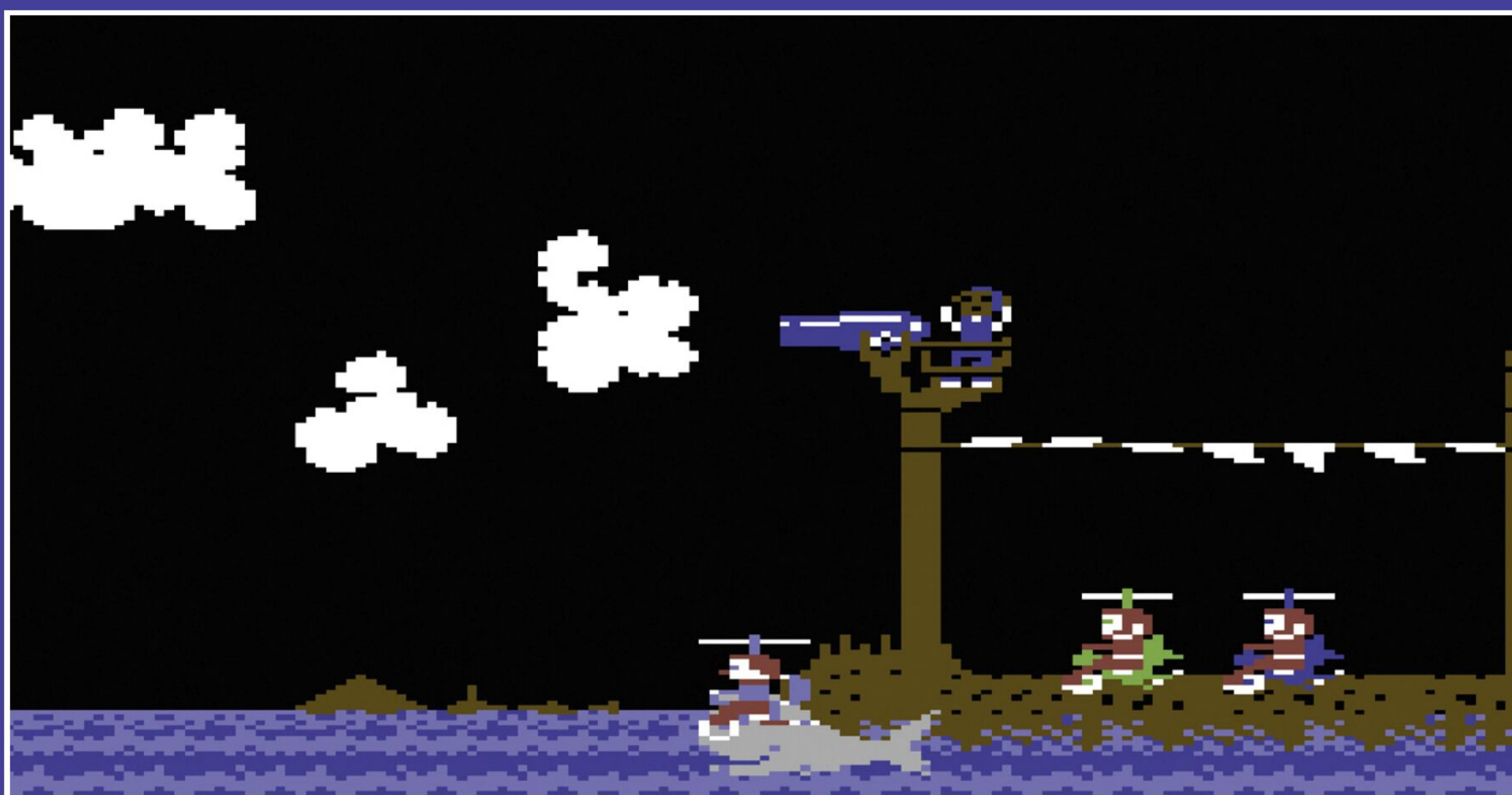
Mancopter™

PRESENTED BY DATASOFT®
PROGRAMMING BY SCOTT SPANBURG



In this C64 exclusive developed in association with arcade manufacturer Nichibutsu, you are in for the pedal-powered race of your life. A fleet of human-powered gyrocopters set off from the start line, flying over perilous blue seas. Gain altitude by pressing Fire, a vital manoeuvre as the lower competitor in any collision will be sent falling towards the waves if their rotors are damaged! If you wondered what that smell was, behold, you start with some fish to lure a passing whale closer, so it can boost you back into the sky with

its blowhole. Extra fish can be grabbed from passing mermaids or the full beak of a passing pelican – but watch out for the hungry ones, they'll snag your fish in a flap! Landing on oil rigs can give you a brief respite, and bonus points are awarded for completing each section of the race within the time limit. Dodge those sneaky mangrove trees, leap over sprightly squid, and steer clear of grumpy clouds ready to zap you with lightning. Fish all gone? Brace yourself for a splashy fin-ale in choppery waters for your high-flying race.





I have no idea how I learned about *Mancopter* back in the day, but I am glad I discovered it. At its heart it's a race version of *Joust* (or game C from the NES version of *Balloon Fight*, which oddly enough also scrolls right to left), a simple premise but one full of charm, cunning, and challenge. Things start off relatively straightforward [thought you said it was right to left? – Ed] but there's always a new hazard on the horizon, as you dodge and weave past baddies while fending off wildly swooping competi-copters. You almost feel sorry sending them into the drink. Almost. I love *Mancopter*; it's a title you can easily return to again and again and feel like you're going to win the race on the next attempt. Just make sure Bruce doesn't get a meal, alright?

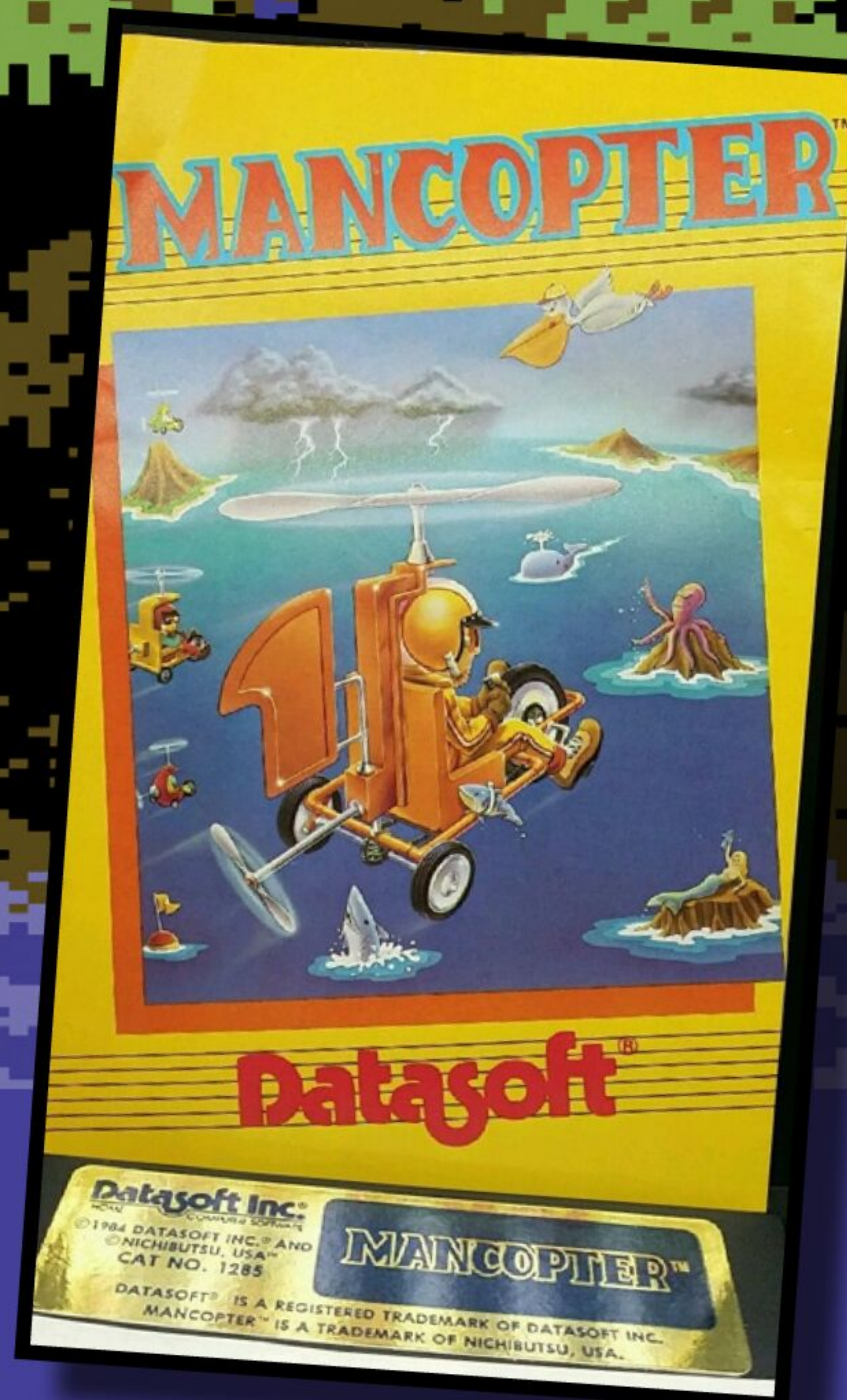


In the closing days of Commodore Format, one of its articles was a look back at lesser-known games, as Andrew mentioned a few pages back. Wait, I'm Andrew. Never mind. I was just glad to discover *Mancopter* through that article. It's a simple premise but the combination of *Joust*-like gameplay and the almost unique left-to-right scrolling makes it feel different. Whether you are dodging the jumping octopus (octopusses?) or grabbing a fish from a siren of the sea, clever little touches make it feel like a 1980s arcade game that would have kept you captivated. Seeing the shark devour your craft is a sad but funny end, and then you start playing again. Two players make it even more frenetic. Truly a hidden gem in the back catalogue that more people should play.



ZZAP! SACK | REVIEW

Here comes old miseryguts to spoil the fun. I hadn't played this before now. I remember *Manimal* from 1984, but had been blissfully unaware of *Mancopter*, so imagine my surprise when I found it's kind of like an odd mix of *Joust* and *Flappy Bird*. Unfortunately, I didn't find it as engaging or challenging as either of those games. In fact, the only way this game ever ends is when you run into almost-unavoidable creatures that steal your fish/lives [better than stealing your fish wives – Ed]. If it wasn't for the baddies you'd go on and on forever. I think I'll keep my chopper stashed away, thanks, and let the other two lads play with theirs to their hearts' content.



PRESENTATION: 77%

Attract mode, good manual, three difficulty levels, left-handed mode, and cute little touches.

GRAPHICS: 61%

Typical of the era - rudimentary parallax scrolling, splashed with colour and charm aplenty.

SOUND: 49%

Repetitive in-game ditty and occasional SFX from those sad pre-Hubbard days.

HOOKABILITY: 84%

Today's fish is trout a la crème. Pedalling through the skies is novel, and fun at first.

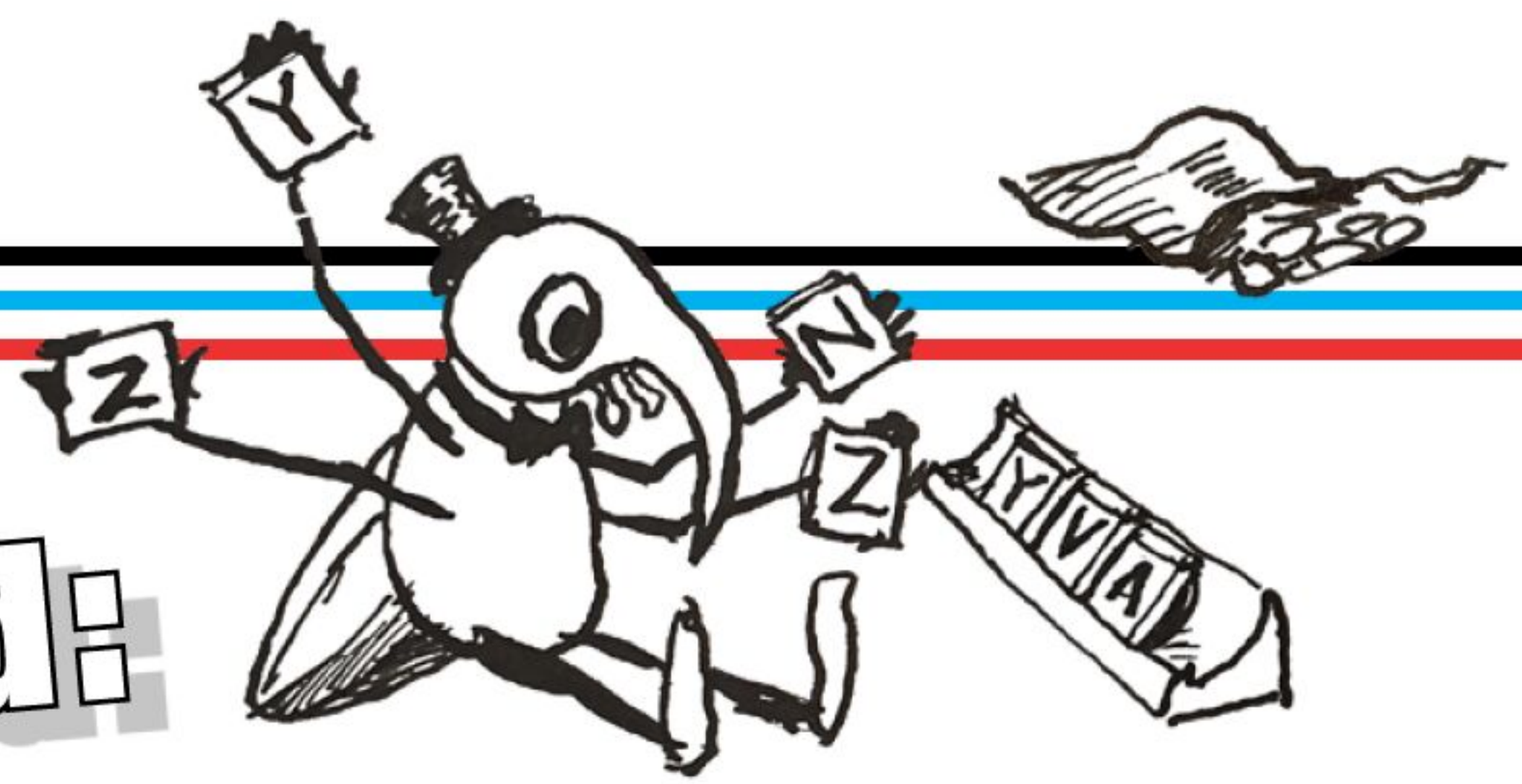
LASTABILITY: 79%

The gradual difficulty curve will see you progress further, but races become repetitive.

OVERALL 82%

High flyer or grounded by turbulence? Cop-ter load of this as soon as you can Man.





Would you believe Mrs Editor still says I always like to have the last word. Absolutely ridiculous. Now welcome again to Ed'z Last Word, that wordy way for us to bid a fond farewell to each issue. Ms Yva the Zyzzyva is ready, as am I. There's been some solid and very ZZAPPY work in this issue, which makes ZZAP! 64 even ZZAP! sixty-more, so thank you very much to everyone who contributed their unending talents to Issue #17. Now as has become tradition, here's some closing thoughts as we close the mag.



Cart Please Everyone All The Time

Rocky & Co. was one of the stand out games we looked at, and believe it or not we don't get shipped freebies here at ZZAP! Towers – after all that could be seen as attempting to skew reviews. But I found myself very excited to order my own copy of this game, and I opted for the Cartridge Collector's Edition, which comes with a badge, keyring, stickers, poster, and maybe a kitschy sink. But this was a real excitement; you know, the type you felt when you were 12, rushing out to buy *Gauntlet* or something. I think the last time I was that excited was when Mrs Ed... got me *Sam's Journey* for Xmas. Kenz/Psytronik are to be highly comKenzded.

Which makes it all the more surprising when I heard that on something called The Internet there is discourse about there being "too many C64 cartridge games". Now, an opinion by definition can't be wrong, but the way I see it, CBM built the machine with a cartridge port, so how can it be bad to use it if not abuse it? Or maybe we'll lose it. The industry that is; it's amazing we have new games at all, so let's not Rocky the boat eh?



Gauntlet Boxing



Speaking of *Gauntlet*, the mention of it in ZZAP! Back reminded me of a very fun time when we heard it was coming out for the C64. My friend Alex and I became competitive over who could get hold of a copy first – to the extent that I ended up crafting a faux "*Gauntlet*" game box using my dad's home office equipment (colour copier etc.) to prank Alex with at school. It worked. For a whole 6 seconds.

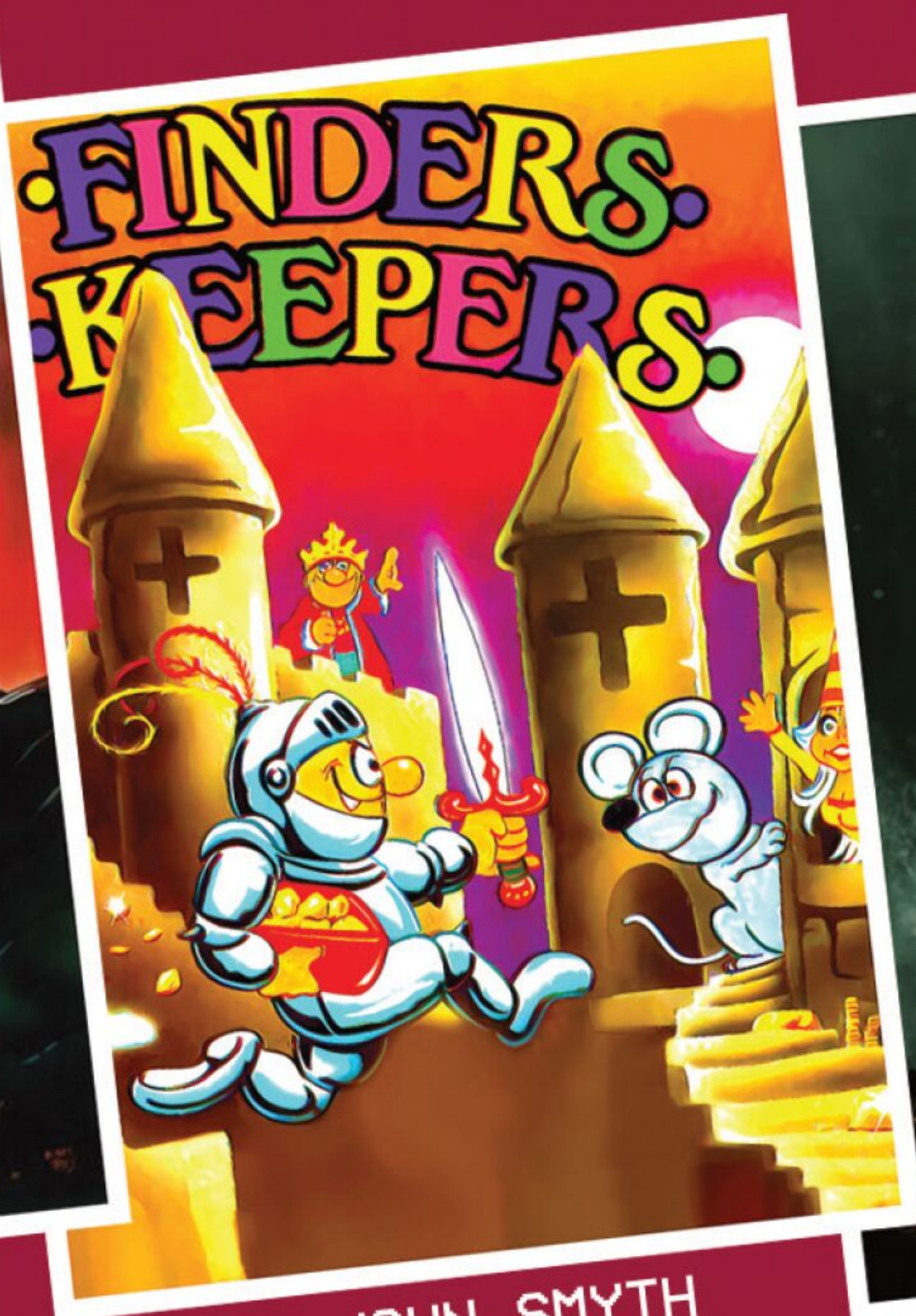
C64MELEON

Like me you might've noticed a theme this month; faux emulation. We had *WinGames* posing as a PC, and *Bill and Ted* posing as a Game Boy! Now technically it isn't emulation, but isn't it cool that our favourite little pooter from nineteen eighty tooter is doing more... being more, for longer than possibly any other piece of consumer electronics ever? Long live Commodore Boy Machines, I mean Windows 64, I mean... *The Commodore 64!* I don't know about you but I see sixty-four ever. And we'll see you next issue, dear game boys 'n' girls. Cheerio!





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